The UNESCO COURIER

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INTERVIEW WITH SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN

PEOPLE AT PLAY

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Tomorrow, another peace

On 25 January 1991, during the Gulf war, an article in which the Director-General of UNESCO set forth his ideas on ways of achieving world peace was published in the Paris daily Le Monde. On this page we reproduce the article in its entirety. Its arguments have lost none of their force or relevance.

BY FEDERICO MAYOR

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO

IN 1945, THE SURVIVORS OF A WAR IN WHICH THE whole world had gradually become embroiled were convinced that reason could only prevail over self-interest if a collective organization were to take responsibility for universal security, which would be based on intergovernmental co-operation, shared development and dialogue between cultures. Peace would result from the emergence of a concerned and responsible world citizenship, transcending individual affiliations to local, regional and national groups.

Human beings were to acquire this sense of citizenship by learning tolerance, by learning to respect the dignity of individuals and the differences between them. Between 1945 and 1990 every effort was made, notwithstanding the persistence of wars, famines and acts of aggression, to address the causes and consequences of those antagonisms which were still causing people to rise against people, nation against nation, state against state.

As a result of these individual and collective efforts, and the sacrifice of many lives, for the first time since the collapse of a wall which had become symbolic, a ray of hope appeared, accompanied by fears and hesitations, calculations and ambitions, feelings of reluctance and resignation. The idea that all men and women share the same world, the same earth, and the same humanity, gained ground, distilling a spirit of joyfulness that was sometimes naive but brought with it a new potential for peace.

However, within a few months, all kinds of economic, financial, military and geopolitical interests, combined with personal ambitions, had toppled a still fragile edifice. Yesterday's hopes are now beset with uncertainty. Peace has again appeared to be slipping from our grasp. Following this setback, and after the vain expenditure of so much effort, would courage and clearsightedness inevitably succumb to lassitude and resignation? Not at all. The obligation to work for peace is not one that can be shrugged aside. This invasion, like those before it, this war, like those that preceded it in other parts of the world, will not make us abandon our efforts. We must start again. We must rebuild. We must strive anew for peace, another peace. For if we are convinced that it is through respect for international law and the resolutions whereby it is given effect that the international community can legitimaly express itself, then that international community must wholeheartedly commit itself to the struggle against ignorance, poverty, discrimination, oppression, and all forms of violence and humiliation which erode freedom and compromise human dignity.

The new international order which could be glimpsed a few months ago was based on undeniable achievements—the emergence of new democracies, the disappearance of the legacy of a tormented past, the acceleration of the disarmament process, negotiated solutions to local conflicts. It must be enriched with new prospects for human development. For if it is to be just and lasting, the peace to which we aspire must be global, and—through dialogue, understanding, and knowledge of the identities and specificities of others—must take into account those whom history has spurned, those who stand by helplessly and see another world being built—a world to which they nevertheless fully belong.

The permanent peace which we hoped to build has turned out to be unable to withstand the logic of war because it was not envisaged in global terms. To achieve such a peace we must, in the short term, patiently restore discussion, common sense, intelligence, sensitivity and tolerance to their rightful place. These virtues and these values must be the keynote of the post-war future. It also seems to me essential that we should all learn to pay more attention to the psychology of peoples, whose roots plunge deep into history and are not governed by political rigidities.

In the longer term, we must insist on a change of direction in the ways of thinking and practice of those responsible for world peace. The standardization of lifestyles, values, mentalities and patterns of behaviour has been too widely presented as the touchstone of modernity. By minimizing the importance of specific cultural, national, ethnic and religious characteristics, this standardization has removed our familiar landmarks. It has now gone far enough. The rediscovery of our own identity should provide the most effective impulse towards tolerance of others.

The spread of scientific knowledge and technological progress has contributed to a fairer, albeit still inadequate, distribution of the benefits of development. But quantitative growth must be guided by renewed respect for the environment, limited natural resources and balanced demographic development.

In all societies, ethical, philosophical and religious ideas should circulate freely. As much attention should be paid to the spiritual dimension of development as to its sustainability.

If we again give precedence to these considerations, then perhaps one day war will be eradicated from the human mind. This was the hope of the founders of UNESCO, men and women who had witnessed and survived a war which was so close to them that its wounds had still not healed.

War and peace are human, all too human. To discourage one and encourage the other, we must first reinstate with tenacity and commitment that which is best in humanity, that which makes us human, for therein lies the source of life, of work and creativity. ■

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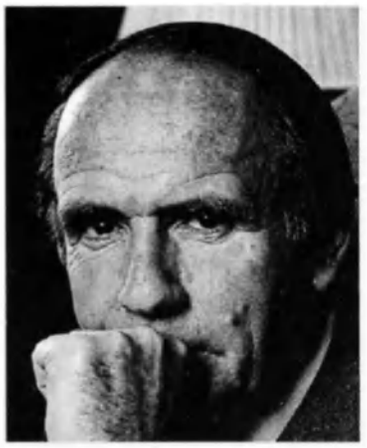

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TO THE EDITOR

The UNESCO COURIER

44th YEAR
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"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,

"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed...

"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

"For these reasons, the States parties ... are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives..."

Extract from the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO, London, 16 November 1945

Cover: 18th-century Indian miniature.

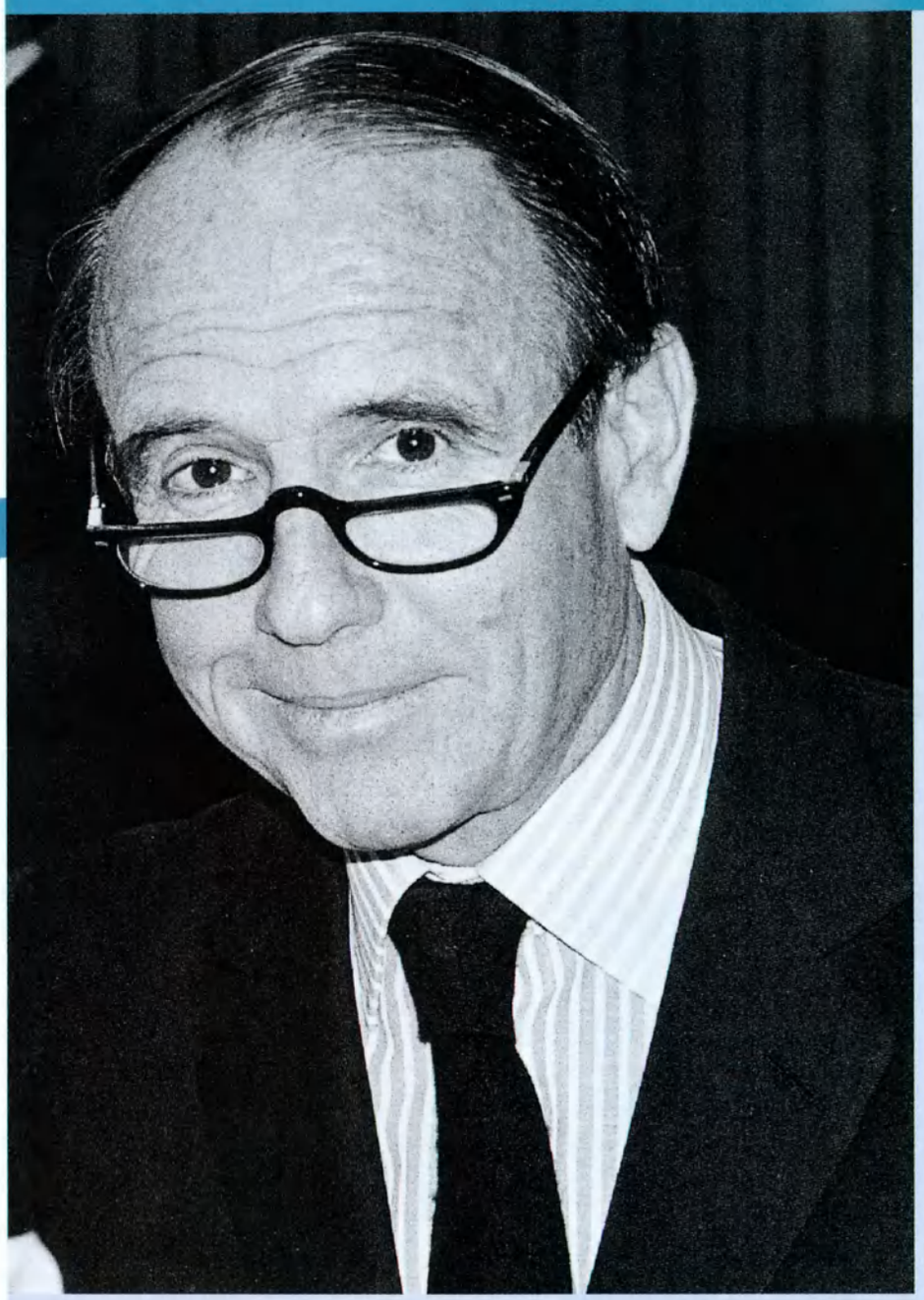
Back cover: The spring festival, Tokyo (Japan)

Special consultant for this issue:
MARTINE MAURIRAS-BOUSQUET

INTERVIEW

SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan is the son of Mohammed Shah, the Aga Khan III, religious leader of the Nizari Ismailis, a Shiite Islamic reformist movement which has many followers in India, Pakistan, Central Asia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Syria and East Africa. In 1958, at UNESCO, he embarked on a brilliant international career, and in 1965 became United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, a position he held until 1977. Still extremely active in the field of humanitarian action, Sadruddin Aga Khan created the Bellerive Foundation, Geneva, which is concerned with development aid and the protection of the environment, notably in Africa. He is also vice-president of the World Wide Fund for Nature.

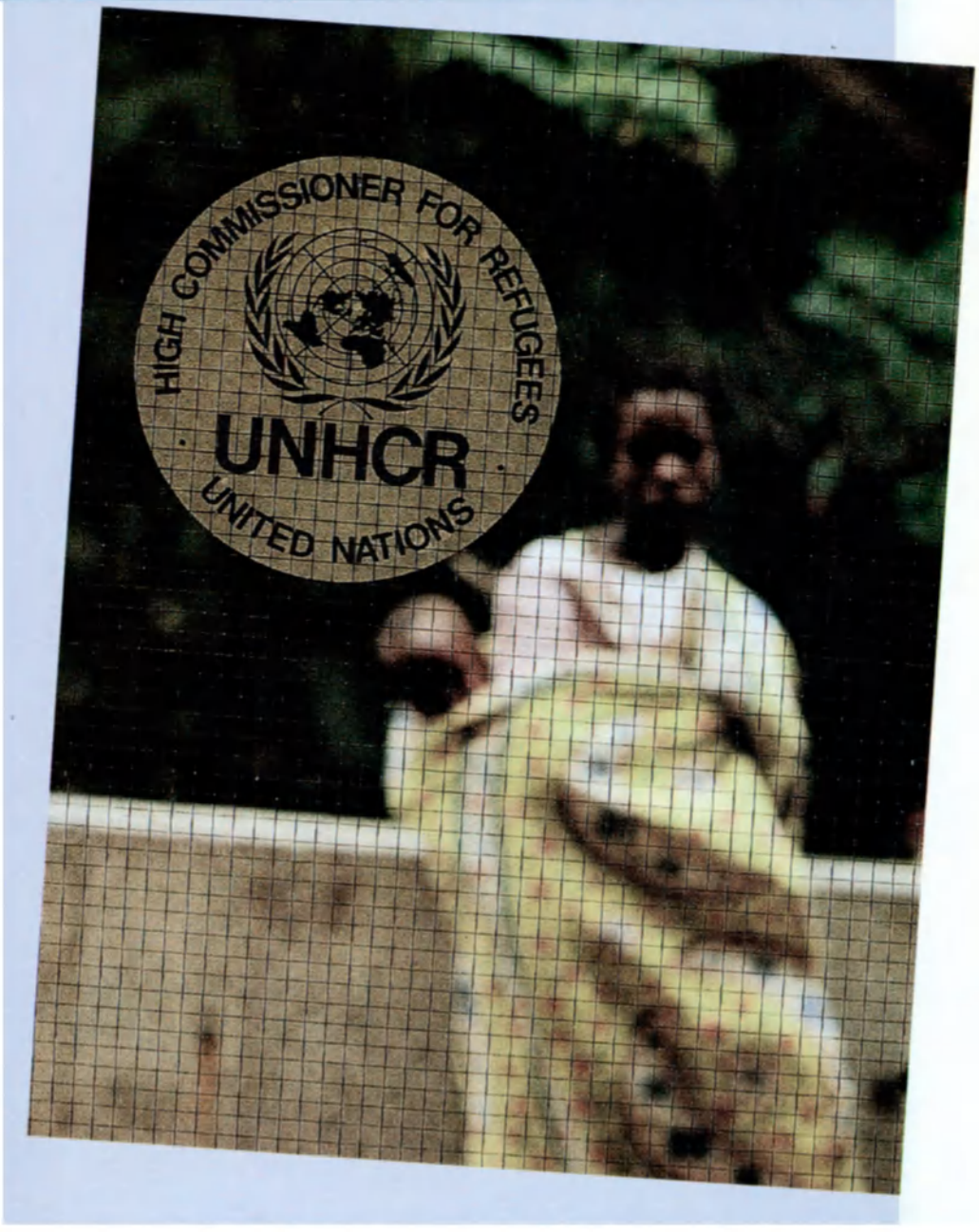


■ *You have been associated with the United Nations system for many years. Did you feel a vocation to serve the UN?*

— I think people are primarily influenced by their family environment. Because of my origins I belong both to the East and the West. Iran is the cradle of our family, but we have never lived there. I was born in Paris, and my mother was French. Through my father, who had a strong influence on me, I came into contact with Islam when I was very young. We travelled widely in the Islamic countries and often visited Egypt. My father was a pioneer in international organizations: he played an active part in the creation of the League of Nations, was its president in 1937, and even inaugurated the Palais des Nations in Geneva. My office is only a few steps away from the one he occupied. That makes for a kind of continuity.

■ *As well as being a senior international civil servant, you are also known as a man of ideas and someone who is closely involved in grass-roots issues.*

—I have tried to resist the forces of bureaucratic inertia. In the corridors of diplomacy people



Poster produced by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

gradually tend to lose their capacity to distinguish between what is important and what isn't. A phrase or a comma in a draft resolution suddenly come to assume disproportionate importance. Negotiations go on for hours, for nights on end, before agreement is reached on what is generally the lowest common denominator. You feel that you have won a great victory. But no-one will read the text which was so difficult to draft.

■ *Don't you find this sort of thing futile?*
— History will judge. Perhaps we shall have a more objective perspective on the United Nations when we come to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. Certainly it is a good thing not to always observe the world through United Nations spectacles. That's why I have set so much store by my independence.

■ *While waiting for the judgement of history, don't you see positive aspects in the work of the United Nations?*
— Indeed. It is now widely and rightly accepted that we live in a world which is more interdependent than ever before, and that problems are increasingly global in character. At the risk of stating the obvious, I would say that when governments realize that certain problems are beyond their powers, it is clear that the United Nations has an irreplaceable role to play.

At the same time, the world is changing considerably and the United Nations must change too. It must become an instrument which responds to the needs of the international community of the year 2000, which will be quite different from that of 1945. This is very far from the case. We should not delude ourselves into thinking that the United Nations is going to change because a certain role has been restored to the Security Council. The Security Council is an exclusive club with a restricted membership, sensitive to the moods of the moment. Its resolutions only remotely affect the organs and institutions of the United Nations which face the great challenges of today.

■ *To return to your own career, which has always taken you towards the most practical activities of international life. I believe you started by taking an interest in the problem of the Abu Simbel temples.*
— Yes, I took my first steps in international life at UNESCO, which at that time was conducting an exciting campaign to save the monuments of Nubia, a campaign which in my opinion remains one of UNESCO's great

achievements. In the middle of the Cold War it was quite remarkable to get East European archaeologists to join archaeologists from the United States and other Western countries in order to save the treasures of ancient Egypt. Not to mention that since 1956 Nasser had not exactly been the most popular Arab figure in the West.

■ *Did the general feeling that Abu Simbel should be saved crystallize at a precise moment?*

— Not only Abu Simbel. There were other monuments which were just as important: the temples of Philae and Kalabsha, the Christian churches of Nubia. The Upper Egypt of the great pharaonic civilizations did not stop at Aswan, it extended to Nubia, to Khartoum in the Sudan. In order to develop, all these regions needed the resources that tourism could bring them.

From an entirely different point of view, in face of the threat of the flooding of archaeological sites by the construction of the Aswan dam, all kinds of people from many countries, independently of their political orientations, were united in thinking that something should be done. At that time I was executive secretary of UNESCO's international action committee for the preservation of the Nubian sites and monuments, and I was strongly aware of this feeling.

■ *So this was your first mission?*

— I was also Head of Mission and Advisor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). I was principally concerned with World Refugee Year (1959-1960). Through a philatelic programme to which all member states of the UN and the Universal Postal Union contributed, we collected a large sum of money and also gave pleasure to stamp collectors.

■ *Was this for the benefit of European refugees alone?*

— No. World Refugee Year was very useful for the Palestine refugees, since the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which was responsible for providing them with assistance, had been in existence since 1949. But it is true that around this time refugees began to appear in the Third World who did not benefit from United Nations aid. One such case was that of the Vietnamese who had fled from the north of their country after the battle of Dien Bien Phu. In Africa, the first refugees from Angola were entering Congo-Kinshasa and Congo-Brazzaville. Refugees from Algeria were flowing into Morocco and Tunisia. These were new situations for UNHCR, which had been originally created for refugees from Eastern Europe and was a kind of European club. Very early on, and perhaps this is the best thing I have done in my career, I tried to avoid all discrimination between European and Third World refugees.

■ *Why were there different categories of refugees and what form did these differences take?*

— They were the result of constraints that were essentially legal. United Nations action was subject to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, an international instrument which was drawn up during the Cold War and, as everyone now accepts, made UNHCR a propaganda instrument against the Eastern countries.

In order to benefit from UNHCR protection, a refugee had to be able to prove that he or she was persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinions, was outside his or her country of origin, and could not enjoy that country's protection. At that time refugees were pictured as people who crossed the Iron Curtain and were fired on from frontier watchtowers. But where did this leave the African populations who were victims of general instability, fleeing tribal warfare on both sides of frontiers traced arbitrarily by the colonial powers? In Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 people knew where the frontiers with Austria were. But there was not a single frontier post between Angola and what was then Congo-Kinshasa!

Above, refugees on the border of Cambodia and Thailand. Left, at the Bellerive Foundation's centre in Nairobi (Kenya), meals are prepared on the low-fuel stoves which the Foundation distributes in Africa.

It was necessary to widen the UNHCR mandate, and this was a long and legally complex process. The protection of the High Commissioner was finally extended to new categories of refugees by virtue of a Protocol which was adopted in 1967 and which I myself strongly supported. These same refugees were also able to benefit from the so-called "good offices" resolutions voted by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

■ *It looks as if Third World refugees were a frightening prospect at that time...*

— People saw millions of men, women and children who could not be integrated. They feared the economic and financial consequences and the repercussions on the labour market. It was already a North-South problem. If it was easy to resettle Czechs, Russians or Hungarians in countries like Australia, New Zealand, the United States and even South Africa, it was difficult to integrate in those countries displaced people originating from Africa or Asia. In any case, most of these refugees did not wish to be resettled permanently. They looked forward to the day when they could return home.

■ *In the twelve years you spent as UN High Commissioner for Refugees, did you see any major changes in the situation of refugees worldwide?*

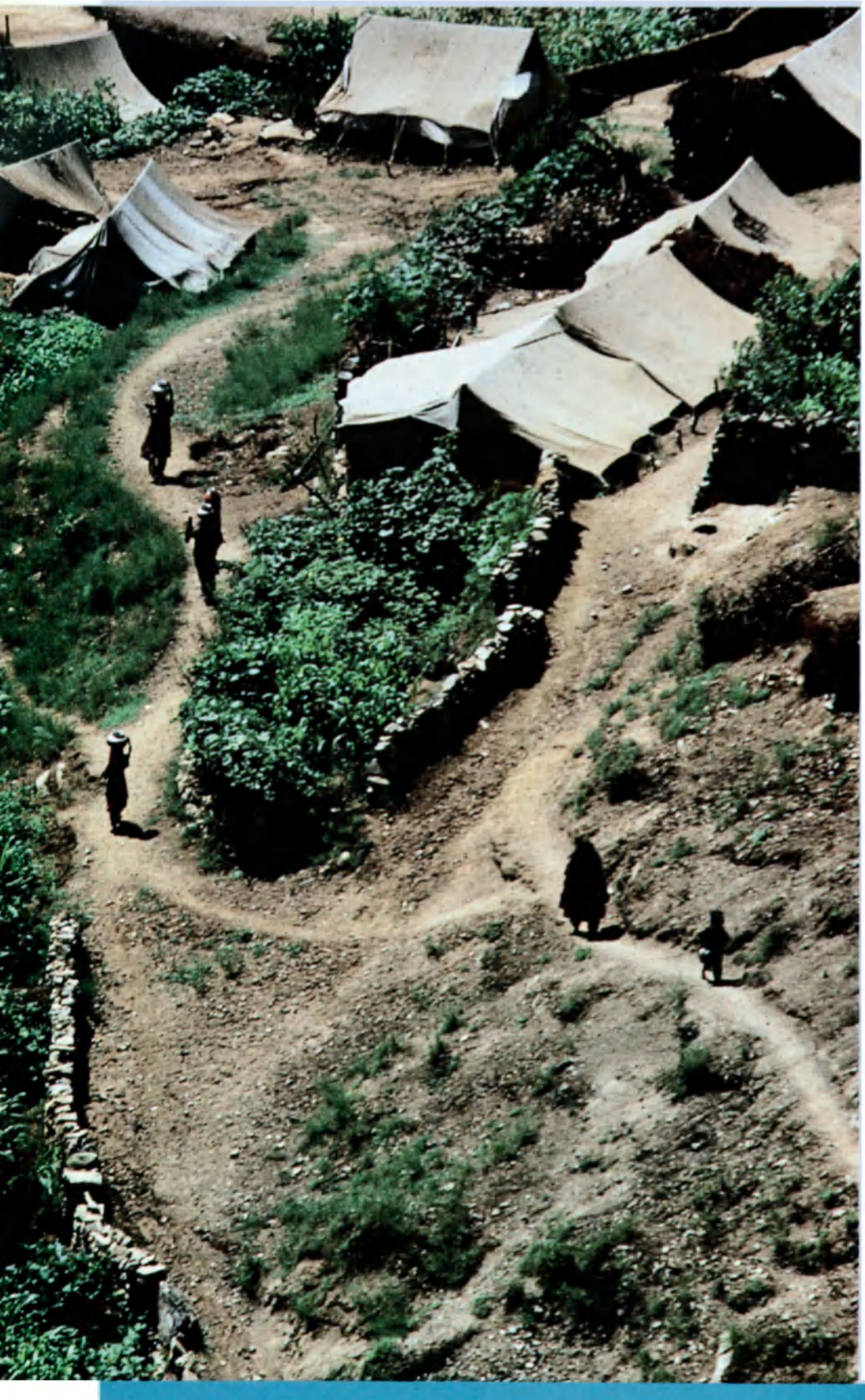
— Yes. First of all, the problem of European refugees was virtually solved, except for certain specific cases such as Polish emigration to the Scandinavian countries or the case of the Baltic countries today. In the Third World, on the other hand, we had to face massive exoduses. In the 1950s in Europe, there were between 200,000 and 300,000 refugees to be helped. In 1971, in Bangladesh alone, there were 10 million overnight! And they were not the only ones. Hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Sudan, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Viet Nam, were waiting to go home.

At present, my successors at the head of UNHCR are faced with another problem: that of the refugees who quit their country and find themselves in camps which they cannot leave on the borders of Cambodia and Thailand, in Hong Kong or El Salvador. They can neither return to their own countries nor go to another. They cannot be integrated, for political, economic or ethnic reasons, either because they do not want to stay in the host country or because the latter refuses to have them. It is a terrible problem.

There is also a new category of refugees which I will call "ecological" refugees. They leave regions in which they can no longer survive, because the food resources are exhausted, the desert is advancing inexorably, and they can no longer even find enough firewood to cook their food. And so they leave. They are not stopped by frontiers. In many cases they cannot return for political reasons.

■ *So you decided to do something about this problem yourself...*

Afghan refugee camp in Dobha, Pakistan.



— I have always been in favour of individual initiatives. I also take a very close interest in the environment, animals, plants, disappearing species....And so I set up the Bellerive Foundation, which takes its name from that of the Geneva commune where I live. It is a non-governmental organization (NGO) which finances a certain number of studies and activities in collaboration with international institutions, British and Scandinavian bilateral aid organizations, and other NGOs such as the World Wide Fund for Nature.

Initially we were very closely involved, along with UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, in the struggle against deforestation. But we wanted above all to be present in the field and to do things at the local level. Rural populations in the Third World suffer far less from the oil crisis than from a very serious firewood shortage. With the help of Swiss specialists we have developed cooking stoves which use very little fuel, and use renewable energy sources such as methane and biogas. We have used these stoves to equip communities, the armed forces, police stations, schools, bush hospitals and many rural African families. These low-priced stoves are today so highly appreciated that we can no longer satisfy the demand, notably in Kenya.

Our programmes are extremely decentralized, we have regional offices. The main one is in Nairobi—deforestation has wreaked havoc in Kenya, whose demographic growth rate is one of the highest in the world. The population doubles every seventeen years!

We are also interested in the risks from nuclear energy. We are a many-sided group whose members include scientists, churchmen, university teachers and senior international civil servants. We organize conferences and inform the public about the possible different options in this field. We are also helping to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Finally, we are helping to defend certain threatened species such as the elephant, which

UNHCR has helped thousands of Namibian refugees to return to their homeland. Below, a refugee group about to leave Lubango airport (Angola), June 1989.

has almost been exterminated by ivory poaching.

■ *Is collaboration increasing between the institutions of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, which are more flexible and closer to people?*
— Certainly. I noted this in Afghanistan, for example, at a time when the UN could not enter the country and when a number of NGOs managed to operate there.

I have worked hard to bring together NGOs and UN agencies, and I am happy to see my efforts bearing fruit. Of course there are still certain suspicions. The NGOs fear the bureaucratic weight and political pressures to which international organizations may be subjected. The international organizations, for their part, fear the sometimes anti-governmental inclinations of the NGOs.

■ *Can any lesson be learned at this stage from the co-operation between intergovernmental institutions and NGOs?*
— When major infrastructure work such as airport, dam or road construction is not involved, the approach of the NGOs, which intervene at grassroots level, is certainly preferable in development projects.

The success of any development project is based on encouraging people to shoulder their own responsibilities and become aware of their own capacities, their rights too, rather than providing them with ready-made solutions. Who knows better than a peasant farmer the agricultural conditions in his country or region? It is not always necessary to send an FAO expert to tell him what crops to grow or what seeds to use. Give him the seeds he asks for, and he will do the rest. Don't tell him how to renovate his irrigation system: give him the necessary equipment and he will do the job far better than us. He will know how to make use of local raw materials. The international expert will turn up with plastic piping and reinforced concrete in a situation where it is better to use beaten earth. As if one could ask UNESCO experts to teach Afghans how to weave carpets!

Let us show great humility towards the peoples we wish to help, for we have very little to teach them. I think we go wrong when we insist, as some have done since 1945, on using experts who are paid Western salaries, drive beautiful cars and live in air-conditioned houses to teach people in the Third World how to improve their living conditions.

■ *So what is the point of international aid?*
— It helps the experts themselves! Multilateral aid should be continued all the same, for it is impossible to remain unaffected by extreme poverty. But to be effective, this aid should enable the victims of poverty to achieve a certain form of self-sufficiency, however modest. It is better to concentrate on less ambitious projects in rural areas than to pursue, for example, the mindless policy of industrializing at all costs in countries where such a course is impossible, in order to obtain currency with which to buy imported mineral water and Camembert!

Those responsible should be induced to change their approach—there should be a kind of peaceful revolution. Here I think that we are starting to learn the lessons from natural catastrophes provoked by man, such as deforestation and drought. Of course the pessimists will say that in any case the planet is ruined, but there are also optimists who believe that it is still possible to influence the course of events. ■

EDITORIAL

In the games of children and the pastimes of adults alike, the capacity for play, for following one's fancy with no thought of immediate gain, is central to the human experience. Biologists and ethologists have demonstrated that play, which is closely bound up with the urge to explore and to satisfy one's curiosity, is a springboard for learning and discovery among human beings and indeed all the higher animals. Many philosophers think that humankind is too pragmatic and serious by half and that if we want to go back to a more authentic, freer and more worthwhile form of existence, we must rediscover the instinct for play.

It is already common practice in industry, finance, the armed forces and research to use simulation games to understand complex situations and engage in decision-making. Play is now even coming to be regarded in some quarters as the method of communication of the future. But at school, which has so strong an influence on every society, has there always been enough concern to preserve the role of play in children's education?

The amount of importance attached to spontaneous play can tell us much about the basic features of a culture. In industrialized societies, for example, play—in the guise of sports, show business or toys—is often at the mercy of the profit motive, with the result that there is a gulf between paid professionals and paying spectators, whose role is a passive one.

Other societies have at times been more successful in preserving the innocence of play and have maintained a judicious balance between play and more serious matters. But how long can this last? If, as some people think, the human species as we know it could not have evolved without the spirit of play, is it not essential to preserve or rekindle that spirit? Today some people are trying to do this by seeking to revive traditional games and sports.

History is full of games that are now shrouded in mystery. Our future will depend on our ability to create not only new techniques, but also new societies and cultures; on our ability, in a word, to continue playing freely. ■

Children's Games (1560), a painting by Pieter Bruegel, the Elder.

"All animals play, but man is one of the few species that carries its youthful capacity for play into adult life"

An appetite for living

by Martine Mauriras-Bousquet

"Man is only truly man when he is playing"

FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER

WHEN placed in a maze, a well-fed rat with no particular cause for anxiety will start to explore its new surroundings out of curiosity and a desire to play. By doing so, it seems to become familiar with the layout of the maze. If food is then put in the maze and the rat is returned to it unfed, it will soon find its way to the food—far more quickly at any rate than another rat which has not previously played in the maze and has thus had no opportunity to find out its plan.

The impulse to play—which can also be called the curiosity or exploration impulse, since for ethologists (students of animal behaviour) the three expressions are pretty well interchangeable—gives species and individuals an obvious advantage in the process of natural selection. The individual who is in the habit of gratuitously exploring his or her environment will have many more opportunities to acquire knowledge and will consequently be better prepared to face unexpected situations.

The most playful species are the most adaptable

To some extent all animals play, explore and move around to no apparent purpose. But only a few species retain in adult life their youthful capacity for play. They include certain birds such as crows, rodents, the higher carnivores and primates and, of course, man. The species with the greatest aptitude for play are also the most "cosmopolitan", in the sense that they have proved able to adapt to very different climates and have thereby improved their chances of survival.

What is true in biology is also true in societies and cultures. In order to subsist in a specific territory a society needs a considerable capacity for hard work, organizing power and determination to pursue its own interests. But these serious qualities—or faults—are not enough to guarantee progress. Myths, social rituals and even science are not based on seriousness but on play, curiosity and gratuitous exploration—factors that stimulate creativity and invention.

Some of the greatest scientists—one might mention at random such names as Kepler, Ampère, Darwin, Gauss, Pasteur, Maxwell, Planck, Poincaré and Einstein—have described how, at the moment of discovery, they felt the same pleasure and the same excitement that a child feels when playing.[1] If the research to which these men made such notable contributions is the basis of modern technology then we must admit the truth of an idea that at first may seem paradoxical—that progress, like culture, is born in play.

We are not of course talking about games such as bridge or football. The problem is largely semantic. The English language uses two words, *game* and *play*, to denote concepts that in French, German, Spanish and many other languages are designated by a single word. This leads to endless confusion. So before embarking on any discussion of play we must agree that these two words denote two very different things. "Games" are social institutions that are the sediment of play. Play itself is an existential attitude, a way of approaching life which can be applied to everything but is not exclusively attached to anything in particular.

Bridge, football, hide-and-seek, dice and dancing are games. But playing cards or dancing do not automatically involve the specific approach to life that is play, nor lead to the particular pleasure which accompanies play. Everyone knows that it is perfectly possible to

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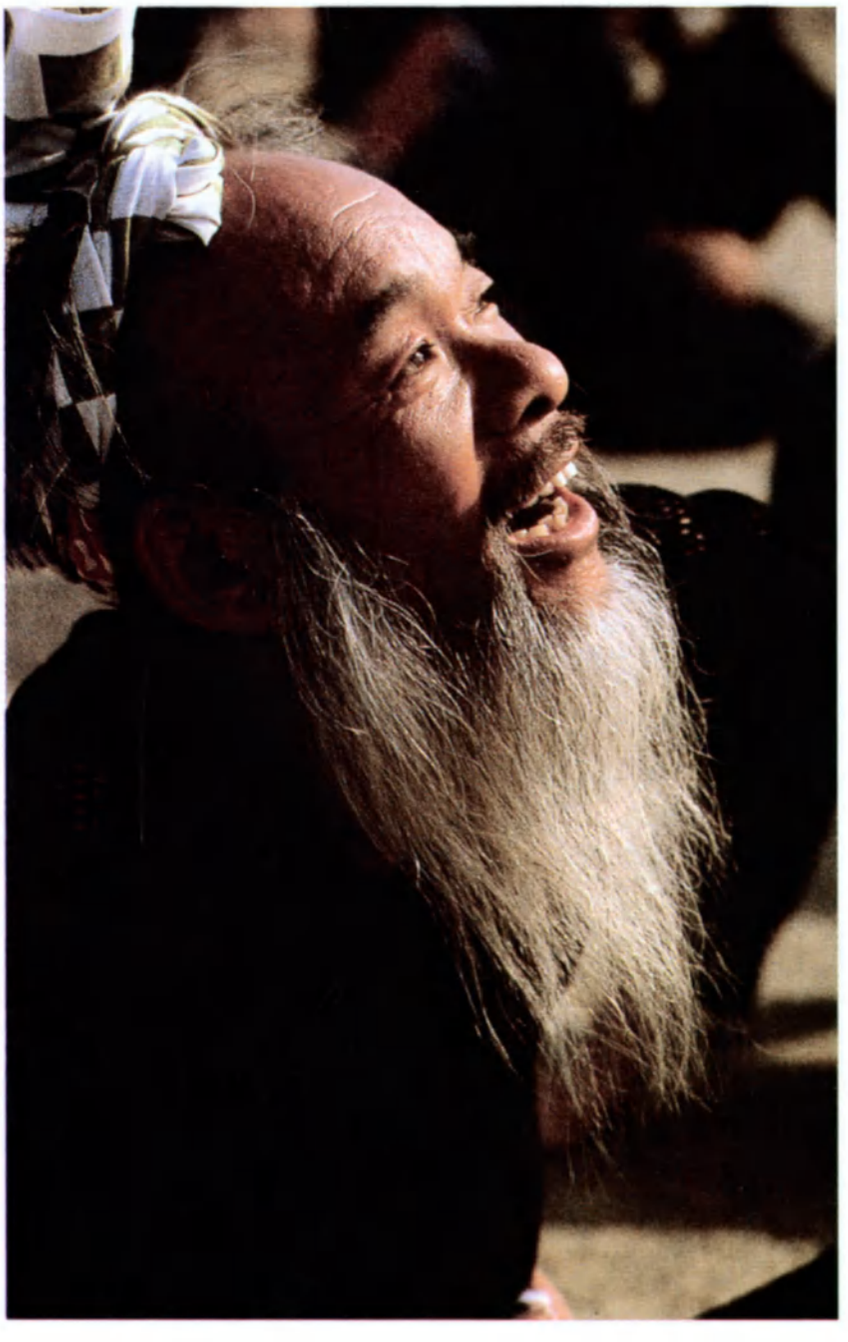
take part in a bridge tournament or to go dancing and be bored stiff. No institutionalized game is ipso facto playful.

In contrast, a number of activities which are not usually considered to be games may be playful experiences. Travelling, conversation, the creation or appreciation of a work of art, getting to know another person, going for a stroll, even work, can all be experienced from time to time as play.

If we think back to childhood, we find that our most vivid memories of the excitement of play often have nothing to do with games as such, but with intensely-felt moments linked to fortuitous experiences such as exploring a house, walking in a strange district, or discovering the world of nature.

From Martin Heidegger to Georges Bataille, from Johan Huizinga to Roger Caillois, from Konrad Lorenz to Gregory Bateson, some of the most eminent thinkers of our time have been keenly interested in the phenomenon of play. A fairly clear idea has gradually emerged in contemporary thought as to the place of play in human experience and in the overall world-picture. Today most philosophers, anthropologists and ethologists would agree on a definition of play as an activity which is its own justification and exists in its own right.

The more play is authentic—as in the case of an absorbing children's game—the more the player feels freed from contingencies of all kinds. Play is totally gratuitous and, as the German philosopher Eugen Fink has remarked, it is an "oasis of happiness" in the desert of so-called "serious" life.



A Japanese kite enthusiast. Kite-flying has long been popular in Asia, especially in Japan where it was traditionally a sport for adults.

Taking life as it comes

To play is, for a moment in time, not to ask life to be anything but what it is, nor to have any purpose other than itself.

Play is desire for that with which one plays, not desire for something which one lacks and feels one must obtain. It is desire for the here and now, for the passing and the coming moment. In other words, play is pure appetite for living, not for this or that type of life made desirable by fashion or habit, but for things as they are, for life as it is.

Take the example of modern tourism. More often than not tourists set themselves precise targets. They want to visit outstanding sites and monuments which, so they have been told, are particularly beautiful. They are looking for curiosities and a change of scene in the picturesque and the exotic. What is supposed to be a pleasure trip is actually subject to a number of imperatives. It is an extremely serious unpaid activity, a kind of holiday task.

Adventurous travellers do not plan everything. They go where their whim takes them. They are not collecting souvenirs as lepidopterists collect butterflies, but looking for an opportunity for self-renewal.

"Serious" desire is a desire for something that one lacks. It is almost like an addict's desire for a drug, a desire which is bound to lead to suffering. It is a desire for something one does not possess, a desire to consume. In our civilization it often focuses on a commodity (in the widest sense of the term) and is therefore dependent on money. In contrast, desire linked to play finds its satisfaction within itself and asks for nothing from outside. It makes desirable whatever it turns to. One might say that it creates the desirability of its object.[2]

An old Eskimo plays cat's cradle and tells a story to a rapt young listener.

Play, the enemy of materialism

The essentially materialistic civilization in which we live today is dominated by desire for what is lacking. It is focused on progress, which means in effect on the continual invention of new needs. For our civilization play is the enemy. It is defined in negative terms as something that is not serious. Play is thus marginalized in theory and in practice. To neutralize it even further, it must be restricted to exceptional occasions (celebrations) and to clearly defined activities (games).

Many authors agree with the American anthropologist Marshall David Sahlins[3] in thinking that play has been continuously marginalized and diverted to other ends ever since neolithic times. Today games have a new market value. With cinema, television, books, magazines, records, sports and tourism, games of all kinds may constitute the most important industry in the industrially developed countries. But play is not necessarily involved in these commodity-games which present play as something that can be bought and thus tend to exclude it. The amount of genuine play diminishes as the number of manufactured games proliferates.

The current fashion for educational games

The trouble with our attitude to play is that we necessarily refer to very different realities by the same name.... These pastimes, this golfing and bowling and these package tours, these soggy writings and anaemic philosophies are the measure of an immense abdication, the reflection of this sad humanity which has preferred work to death.... First of all, the principle of the new world must be affirmed: that which is useful rules supreme and play is only tolerated if it is of use.

Georges Bataille
from *Critique* No. 51-52, August-September 1951.

and toys is a good example of this. The very concept of an educational toy is in many ways questionable. It is true that children, like adults, can learn, create and discover a new universe in the free-ranging mental activity that is play. But this does not mean that the uses of play in education are boundless. An educational game, like any other kind of game, does not automatically lead to play. It all depends on the inclinations of the person who is being induced to play.

Can play be taught?

So we either teach children or let them play freely. But we cannot simultaneously let them play freely and teach them multiplication tables, the alphabet or the principles of hygiene. All attempts to instruct, indoctrinate or inform by means of play are doomed to failure because they are contrary to the very nature of play. However, the fact that play cannot teach ideas or values does not mean that it cannot be educational. As we said at the beginning of this article—and as St. Augustine noted in the opening pages of his *Confessions*—play is eminently educational in that it whets our curiosity about the world and about life itself, and is the principle governing all discovery and all creation.

While it is a mistake to claim, as Montaigne and Froebel did, that play can be a means of

It is clear that when birds and higher mammals are at play, their rapid succession of instinctive behaviour patterns cannot derive from the same sources as motivate these patterns when the situation is a serious one.... What is new in exploratory behaviour is only that the motivation is furnished by the learning process itself, not by the achievement of the final consummatory state.

Konrad Lorenz
Behind the Mirror: A Search for a Natural History of Human Knowledge,
translated by Ronald Taylor © Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1973.

"Our most vivid memories of the excitement of play have nothing to do with games as such, but with intensely-felt moments."

The birth and the development of the universe is the playing of a child pushing pieces around a board. Destiny is in the hands of a playing child.

Heraclitus
Fragment 52.

Why does the child play to whom Heraclitus attributes the Game of the world? He plays because he plays. The "because" disappears in Play. Play has no "why". He plays while playing.

Martin Heidegger
Der Satz vom Grund, 1957

Koreans playing Paduk, a variant of Go, a popular board game in the Far East.

instruction, it is extremely tempting to conceive of education for play—the invention of ways of developing or reawakening the capacity for play, in adults as well as children. If there is something that people today urgently need to learn, surely it is how to use their leisure time.

What type of education could this be? Obviously it would not, strictly speaking, involve teaching. It is possible to tell other people about play, but it is difficult to see how a playful attitude could be instilled into them because such an attitude is essentially self-taught. Collective activities should be strictly voluntary. There must be no punishment, examinations, diplomas or financial reward.

How can spontaneity and education be reconciled? The French philosopher Mikel Louis Dufrenne[4] has shown that this question, which Herbert Marcuse[5] had already examined, was central to the "cultural revolution" which shook the student world in the 1960s and might well occur again. Why wait for another student revolt before trying to introduce play into such fields as aesthetics and philosophy, that have been unnecessarily dominated by instruction? Play cannot teach us about the history of literature, art or philosophy or theories of sociology. On the other hand, it is the best and perhaps even the only way of introducing us to aesthetic pleasure and meditation, and, at a more modest level, teaching us to question accepted ideas and opinions.

Initiation into aesthetic pleasure by means of play would not be an attempt to form people's tastes, to suggest what should or should not be liked. It would aim to awaken their capacity to find pleasure in beauty and help them to become aware of this pleasure. Most important of all, it would help them to extend this feeling of pleasure to other objects of their choice, leaving aside any value judgements. The aim of such an initiation is clearly not to transmit academic or social skills, but to encourage an aesthetic appreciation of the world around us—and this is, most definitely, a game. ■

1. Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, 1964.
2. J. Lacroix, *Le désir et les désirs*, Paris, 1975.
3. Marshall David Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, Aldine Atherton, Chicago, 1972.
4. Mikel Louis Dufrenne, *Art et politique*, Paris, 1974.
5. Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, and *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, (1972).

Between order and chaos

by Graciela Scheines

Like a game, society has rules. What happens when the players cheat?

"I don't think they play at all fairly, and they all quarrel so dreadfully one can't hear oneself speak—and they don't seem to have any rules in particular; at least, if there are, nobody attends to them...."

The speaker is Alice, heroine of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, and she is describing her confusion at a bizarre croquet game in which all the normal rules have been abandoned. The croquet ground is not the usual smooth lawn but a wasteland of ridges and furrows. The hoops, balls and mallets are all living creatures that literally refuse to play the game. A bloodthirsty and tyrannical Queen rules the proceedings by whim, unilaterally deciding when play starts and finishes and having the other players' heads cut off on the slightest pretext. They too behave rather oddly, fighting and insulting one another and playing all at once without waiting their turn. Their fear of the Queen makes them suspicious and cruel and encourages cheating. But then they are not playing because they want to, but because they have been ordered to do so.

Carroll's parody brilliantly illustrates the links that bind play, power and society. Alice's experience in the croquet game effectively lays bare the irrational and sometimes dangerous mechanisms of social life. Reading her account of it, it is hard not to think of the game of democracy, when it is disturbed by the arbitrary decisions of a few unfair players who prevent their adversaries from playing, treating them as enemies rather than as equals worthy of respect. The crazy hoops, balls and mallets are simply a metaphor for bureaucratic institutions when they impede decisions and projects undertaken in the public interest.

In contrast with the Queen's croquet game, any kind of genuine play seems to be a model of conviviality and sociability, even including those violently competitive games that worry some teachers so much, for they too have an educational function. From time immemorial children in every country have played at samurai, soldiers or cowboys and Indians, using sticks in place of spears or rifles. Even if such games give vent to aggressive instincts, they do not encourage children to murder or promote a cult of violence. On the contrary, playing at war serves a useful purpose, even at the cost of occasional cuts or bruises, for it prepares children for democratic co-existence by teaching them to defend their own beliefs without despising those of other people. Always granted, of course, that the players respect the rules, which set limits on the degree of aggressiveness allowed and ensure respect for adversaries.

When any social group turns its back on this model, however, whether by forgetting it or breaking its rules, the gates are opened for every conceivable abuse of power. As soon as the rules cease to apply equally to all citizens without distinction, or when rivalry degenerates to the point at which one group terrorizes another, then the

> *An institution operates partly like a game, so that it too may be seen as a game which had to be founded on new principles and take the place of an old game. This new game responds to other needs, complies with other norms and regulations, calls for other virtues and aptitudes. From this point of view, a revolution can be said to represent a change in the rules of the game.*
>
> **Roger Caillois**
> *Les jeux et les hommes* © Gallimard, Paris, 1967.

Left, the Queen's croquet game: "the croquet balls were live hedgehogs, and the mallets live flamingoes, and the soldiers had to double themselves up and stand on their hands and feet, to make the arches". Illustration by Gwynedd M. Hudson for a 1932 edition of *Alice in Wonderland*.

What is a game but an activity which is originated by man, who establishes its principles, and which can have no consequences inconsistent with those principles. Once a man feels he is free and wants to make use of his freedom...his activity is coloured by play: ...he himself sets value on his acts and devises their rules, only agreeing to pay according to the rules which he himself has set and defined.

Jean-Paul Sartre
L'être et le néant © NRF, Paris, 1948.

whole concept of ordered and fair competition disappears and the worst excesses become possible.

There cannot be games without rules. The act of playing involves creating order. The players may make the rules up themselves or may choose voluntarily and enjoyably to submit to existing regulations, insofar as the order of the game both hampers and encourages the freedom of the player.

But the patterns of everyday life must be temporarily interrupted in order to create this order. A kind of vacuum has to be created before play can begin. That is why neither the Queen nor her subjects can truly be said to be playing in Alice's croquet game. Even in the game they are still prisoners of the serious business of everyday life, whose hierarchies, repressive order, punishments and fears they reproduce. The disorderliness of life intrudes into the game and confuses the players. The climate of terror that reigns in Carroll's imaginary kingdom leaves no room for the spirit of play because it leaves no place for freedom.

It follows that there are two essential steps in genuine play: a temporary relapse into chaos followed by the creation of a new order. Chaos and the void are not easy to accept, and this may explain why old people and children are much

Tug-of-war in Bangladesh.

readier to play games than adults who are too tied up with everyday responsibilities to abandon their familiar routine.

Some people, however, never get beyond the first step. For them, creating chaos is not a preparatory stage but an end in itself which they seek to perpetuate by systematic and purposeless destruction. Chaos can be a necessary step on the path to the founding of a new social order, but if it goes on too long, the law of the jungle prevails and individuals become subject to the despotic caprice of an autocrat or a ruling group.

Play requires a balance between order and chaos, destruction and creation. If the balance is upset, play ceases to be possible. On one side of the coin, there are the forces that turn citizens into mere cogs in a machine: fear of the unknown or of a break with established ways, attachment to a daily routine that leaves no room for freedom or for change. On the other, the exaltation of chaos and permanent destruction turns man into a beast of prey and can only lead to violence and absolutism.

The past forty years have been marked by a growing infatuation with games, particularly those invented by and for adults. We now have games weekends, games courses, games marathons. There is also a growing market for business games aimed at decision-makers and executives.

In such exercises, the materialism of the modern world generally perverts the true spirit of play. The game is no longer a gratuitous activity indulged in for its own sake, but a utilitarian pursuit aimed either, in the case of work simulation, at preparing young people for adult life and a career, or, in the role-playing type of business game, at envisaging work scenarios and practising decision-making with the aim of improving commercial, political or diplomatic acumen.

In these instances play is gradually being deprived of its fundamental significance, not by disequilibrium between the forces of chaos and order but through the erosion of the line that separates play from real life. When the only reason for playing is to win (time, experience, or money) then play ceases to be a pastime or leisure activity. It is no longer the art of enjoying spare time. ■

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Gambling at Las Vegas (USA).

Doing what comes naturally

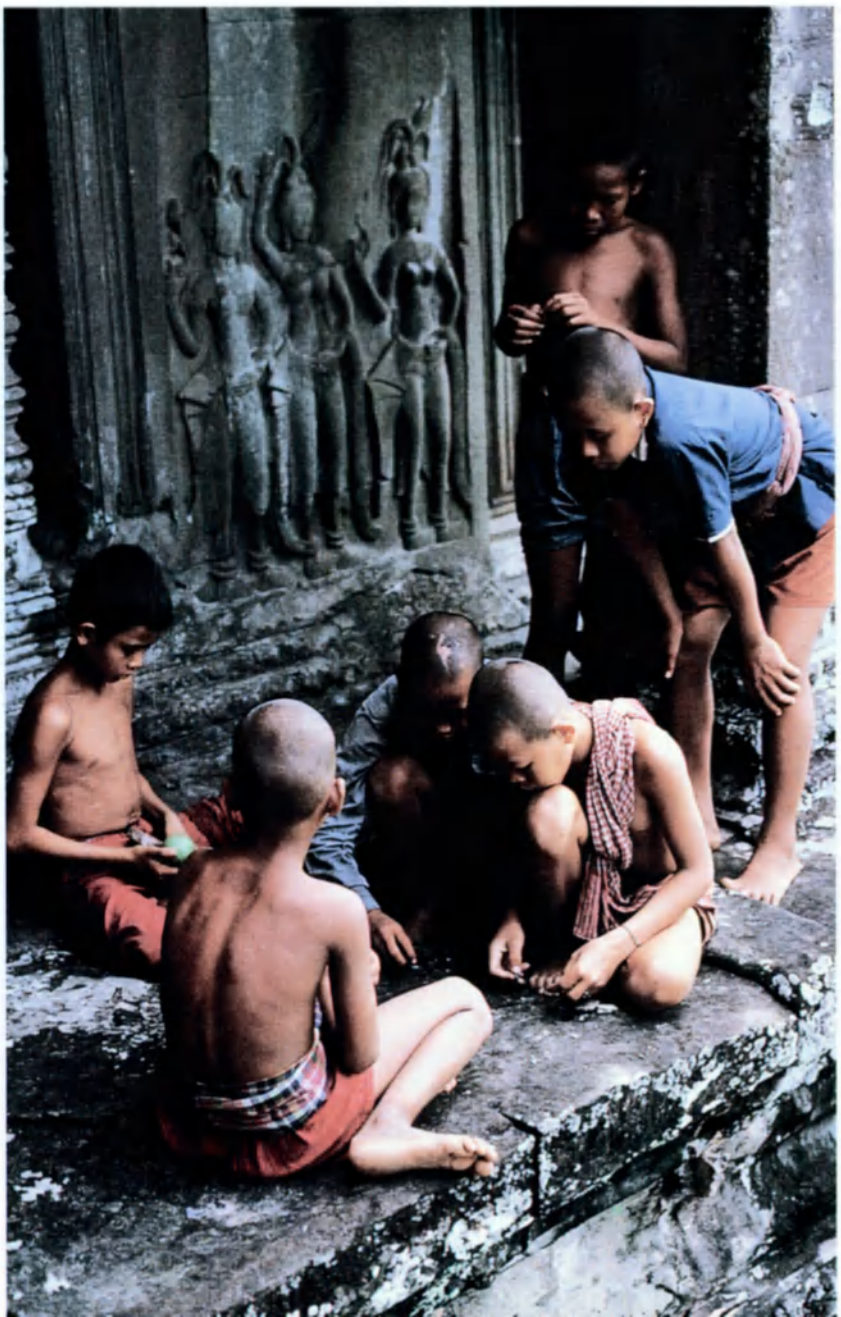
by Shalva Amonashvili

A child at play is the toy of nature

CHILDREN reveal an instinct for freedom in everything they do, but especially when they play. Everyone knows how much they love to play and how completely engrossed they become in games. For them, playing is what life is all about, and they give themselves up to it wholeheartedly. This is something adults find hard to understand.

Children experience an immediate psychological need which is expressed as "I want...", and adults cannot always persuade them to suppress it or at least to wait for a while. Children feel the same kind of urge to play: "I want to play....let me go out to play!" A refusal will lead to conflict. Children also protest when adults try to get them to stop playing, even if only for a moment, so difficult do they find it at such times to give attention to anything else.

In a temple of Angkor (Cambodia), children play with coloured pebbles on a grid pattern traced out on a flat stone.



The need to play does not cease when children go to school, but adults attempt to channel it towards learning and homework. Parents know only too well that they will never have to force their children to play, although persuading them to study is a daily chore. The time-honoured formula is, of course, "First do your homework, then you can go and play!" This kind of bargain is struck in virtually every family, but is it a good thing?

There is no clear-cut answer to this question. If children are subjected to authoritarian pressures at school, then parents, unversed in the subtleties of child psychology, also have to use their authority at home in order to influence them. But the motivation to learn goes askew when children study not to acquire knowledge and get ahead, but to win the right to play, to engage in an activity they prefer.

The impulse to play

In children the course of development is very intense. Nature itself is expressed through them. At any given moment, some function or other becomes dominant, pushing the child towards a form of activity that offers it the fullest scope. The foremost of these activities is play.

Hence children have good reasons for playing, which owe more to internal stimuli than to the environment. It is not the ball that asks the child to play with it, but the the child's inner functions that are looking for something that will

Game of skill (Afghanistan).

It should be noted that the games of children are not games, and must be judged as their most serious acts.

From *The Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, translated by George B. Ives © The Heritage Press, New York, 1946.

Whether he is keeping himself occupied or amusing himself, it is all the same to him; his games are his occupations, he does not see any difference between the two.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Emile ou l'éducation (1762), Garnier, Paris, 1961.

make it possible to satisfy an immediate developmental need.

The rules of the game

Children at play are free, even when there are rules to be observed. A child who does not abide by them will soon be excluded by the other children: "Go away", they'll say, "you're breaking the rules". Children are thus free to choose whether or not to play but, having joined in, they immediately lose their freedom of action since they have to play by the rules and not as they might have preferred.

In fact children are happy to comply with the rules of a game and don't like to see them being broken. They need rules and willingly submit to them from the age of four or five. Their capacities are pushed to the limit when they seek to overcome the difficulties of a game. The tension created gives the child a huge emotional pleasure and is all part of the fun.

When the functions expressed through play reach saturation point, they are switched off for a while. Children stop playing and put aside their toys. They stop as easily as they started. It is usually a waste of time trying to persuade them to continue. A moment ago they were fully immersed in a game, now they're no longer interested in it. Yet they may well go on directly to another game or another kind of activity under the influence of another set of functions.

When children want to play, the choice of game is no small matter. They must choose the game or toy themselves, and they will play until the desire to do so has gone. An old and stubborn psychological theory has it that children release surplus energy in the course of play. But where do they find this surplus energy? And why should it be released for no obvious reason? No, nature does not create surplus energy, but just what is needed to develop the functions which will in turn sustain the individual's capacities for work, creative endeavour and all the other activities of adult life.

To forbid games and oppose the free expression of the child's natural functions (and of his or her potential abilities and skills) would be tantamount to interfering with the process of self-realization, to opposing the play of nature itself.

Parents concerned about their child's progress at school, or seeking to develop a special talent, may succeed in excluding play from his or her life. Is such a "far-sighted" policy conducive to the formation of the child's personality and self-fulfilment? The few known exceptions, such as Mozart, whose father locked him in his room as a child and made him study music for hours on end, merely confirm the general rule. It will never be known how many people have been irremediably damaged through being thus prevented from giving expression to the free play of nature during their childhood.

The major error in wanting a child to make an effort simply through love of duty, simply through respect for abstract discipline, is to forget that the child is not a man, and for him other values correspond to those of the adult.... For the child, play is work, the good, duty, the ideal of life....

To ask of a child work based on something other than play is to act like a fool who shakes an apple tree in springtime to get some apples: instead of getting apples, by making the flowers fall he denies himself the fruits promised in autumn.

Edouard Claparède
Psychologie de l'enfant et pédagogie expérimentale © Delachaux et Niestlé, Neuchâtel, 1951.

A serious business

For children playing is not a way of shirking difficulties or making things easier for themselves. Adults should not assume that children play games just for fun, as a means of avoiding "serious" activities. We have all heard parents complain: "All they think about is playing, they never open a book, they don't want to learn anything!" Teachers sometimes complain to parents that their children spend all their time playing

Below, miniature football in Tombouctou (Mali).

Top, Shanghai children mime a fencing match with wooden swords.
Above, children at play in northern Russia.

in class, never listen, never do what they are told. But all that parents can do to influence their children is tell them off, lay down the law or punish them. It is open to question whether such methods ever achieve anything from the educational point of view.

Of course children should not be allowed to spend all their time playing while adults stand by waiting for them to have had enough. Yet it has to be recognized that children have a natural instinct to play and that is essential for their balanced development that they do so.

Nature bequeaths to children not only abilities, skills and functions, but also a wise internal "instructor" responsible for directing their activity and their development. The fact is that since man took his first steps a million years ago until the present so-called civilized age, nature has not entrusted, and will perhaps never be able to entrust, human beings to the care of parents and teachers alone. Adults responsible for bringing up children need to understand the role of play in development so that they can create the material and spiritual conditions whereby the natural abilities of children can be freely expressed and they can find self-fulfilment.

If more adults knew how to play with children, all would be well. Unfortunately, children's games tend to disturb us, distracting us from what we are doing and demanding that we assume a more active educational role. Children have an innate curiosity for things and will not wait for someone to come along and oblige them to learn. They want to know everything, but for this they need to have well-developed cognitive powers.

I always assess the educational process by the extent to which it shapes the growing child's personality. I am of course in favour of a humanist education, a pedagogy of co-operation that can be instrumental in moulding the personality. And I have analysed the psychology of play in order to identify those aspects crucial to the development of a child's internal functions: freedom to choose an activity and scope for exercising the will.

The pitfalls of education through play

It is fashionable today to claim that play is the chief means by which children learn. Perhaps this is a reaction to authoritarian methods of teaching. But we should be wary of the pitfalls of education through play, because the longer that children are kept from serious study, the more difficult they will find it later on. The primary goal of education should be to make serious things interesting.

Play alone does not result in the full development of children. Allowing children freedom to play does not mean that they should be constantly entertained or their every whim gratified. Admittedly, play serves as a foundation for the development of individuals who are useful to themselves and to society, but lessons should be serious and it is their very seriousness that should engross children. This kind of seriousness does not thwart their desires, but forcing them to be serious might do so.

In order to learn, children should have a feeling of free choice and of self-respect. If this can be achieved they will not have to be coaxed with promises of games or amusements. A serious approach, respectful of the developing personality, will be most likely to engage their attention and help them come to terms with the complex problems of learning, morals and behaviour. ■

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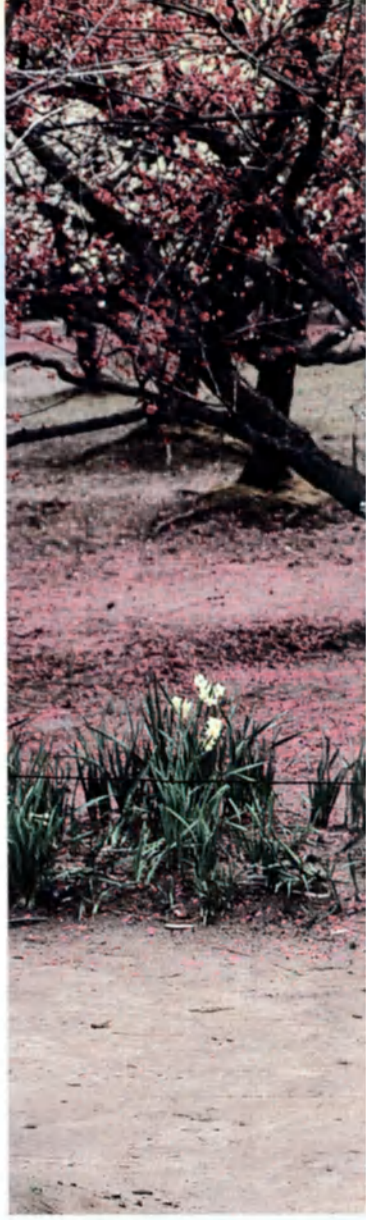
Smile, smile, smile

by Marsi Paribatra

In the Far East people always look on the bright side, even when life's no joke



SERENITY is one of the salient qualities of the arts, religions and philosophies of the Far East. Far more significantly, it is also characteristic of the behaviour of people of all ages and social classes as they face the trials and tribulations of everyday life.

Visitors to Thailand often remark on the smiling faces they see all around them. Air hostesses, children in the streets, market traders, wealthy businessmen—everyone seems to be smiling.

It can be irritating. How many European visitors to Thailand feel exasperated when they are smilingly informed that their car has broken down, their flight has been cancelled or the hotel where they are due to stay is booked up. They think people are making fun of them, whereas what the Thais are really trying to do is soften the blow and get them to look on the bright side.

There is a large measure of conventional courtesy in this smile. It is a mask. Yet how could the Thai people keep smiling if the smile did not reflect their true attitude to life? A visitor who learns a few words of Thai is bound to notice that a certain expression turns up over and over again in conversation: *maï pen araï*... ("never mind").

This formula covers all life's minor troubles. There's no need to get annoyed or fret over small inconveniences, there's no point in turning life into a drama. *Maï pen araï.* If people smile when they announce the death of a loved one, it is not through lack of feeling, but as if to say that what has happened was inevitable, to spare others from grieving and to avoid spoiling their enjoyment of life. There's no need to make a fuss. Basically, life is just a game.

This attitude, so characteristic of Thailand (in the early twentieth century Siam was known as the "land of smiles"), is found throughout the Far East, from Sri Lanka to Laos and from Bali to Japan. At the beginning of this century Lafcadio Hearn, the writer who introduced Japanese culture to the West, took Japanese nationality, even wrote a short book about the Japanese smile.

Everything passes: youth, beauty, love, life, happiness and unhappiness. Impermanence is the backcloth to human existence and the great game of the universe.

"In Far Eastern cultures the art of living, and art itself, are based on the subtle effects of impermanence".
Above, cherry blossom time in Okayama, Japan.
Left, a Japanese bonze composes an *ikebana*, a flower arrangement with a precise symbolic meaning.

In Far Eastern cultures the art of living, and art itself, are based on the subtle effects of impermanence. Moments of happiness and beauty should be enjoyed precisely because they are fleeting, but people should not become too attached to them. As a Japanese haïku poem says: "The wave comes and goes/I wish to touch the water/My sleeve is damp" (with tears, it is implied). The poet thus suggests that those who play with love may get hurt. The risk of suffering a little or a lot is also part of the game.

Perhaps all aesthetic feelings are based on the impermanence of things and lead to the "desperate joyfulness" so typical, for example, of Mozart's music. But this sense of impermanence is nowhere so apparent and so systematic as in the aesthetics of Zen Buddhism, whose influence began to permeate Chinese and Japanese art in the seventh century.

The cult of the passing impression was deeply rooted among the wider population as well as courtiers and intellectuals. Even today, at cherry blossom time, thousands of young Japanese spend the night in Tokyo and Kyoto parks watching the first flowers unfold.

True play is only possible when too much importance is not attached to the game. The ability to achieve detachment, to divert one's attention from oneself, is a source of wisdom and a source of delight in play.

Detachment and play

If the East is compared with the West, in spite of all the risks inherent in such sweeping generalizations, the stereotype of the Easterner as someone who is less self-absorbed than the Westerner is perhaps not entirely false. Outside intellectual and cosmopolitan circles, it is quite rare in the Far East to hear young people say that they are trying to "fulfil themselves". The Buddhist, for whom the self is an illusion, would not dream of doing such a thing.

Of course the people of the Far East, like people everywhere, assume all kinds of social roles, but they never forget that they are only roles. They probably act their parts with greater aplomb because they know that they are artificial. The less importance we attach to the reality of the roles we impersonate, the readier we are

to accept the masks that etiquette prescribes us to wear according to our sex, age or social status.

Less self-centered than Europeans, the people of the Far East do not draw a sharp distinction between man and the rest of the world, particularly between man and animals. We consider that we are different from other animals, but not to the point of being separate from them. We are not necessarily kinder to animals than Europeans, in fact sometimes we may be even more cruel than they are, but we are less distant, less haughty and more "polite" to our fellow-creatures. To realize this, one need only see how a child in a Japanese park makes a little bow when feeding bread to a deer.

Feeding time in a Japanese park.

Strict observance of the rituals of politeness is the great parlour game of the Far East. The distinguished anthropologist Gregory Bateson said that play is the best form of communication between different species such as dog and monkey, man and dolphin, as well as the best form of communication between people of different generations, social classes and cultures. When a child and a cat play together, the unity of the universe, fragmented by human pride, is renewed.

Thai people are by no means ascetic, but they have in general assimilated the notion that life and death, freedom and constraint, sadness and joy, happiness and misfortune, go together and are indissociable from each other. And so they take life as it comes and enjoy the passing moment. The Thai expression *sanuk dee* ("it's very pleasant") is heard as frequently as *maï pen araï* ("never mind"), mentioned above. When something pleasant happens, Thais will say *sanuk dee* ("that goes down nicely"); in adversity, *maï pen araï* ("it's not so bad"). Aren't these the very principles of life as a game? ■

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A superficially miraculous phenomenon is the invention of play between members of contrasting mammalian species. I have watched this process in interaction between our keeshond and our tame gibbon.... The gibbon would come suddenly out of the rafters of the porch roof and lightly attack. The dog would give chase, the gibbon would run away, and the whole system would move from the porch to our bedroom, which had a ceiling instead of exposed rafters and beams. Confined to the floor, the retreating gibbon would turn on the dog, who would retreat, running out onto the porch. The gibbon would then go up into the roof, and the whole sequence would start over again, to be repeated many times and evidently enjoyed by both players....

To describe cross-species play as an evolution of items of behaviour would be incorrect because no new items of behaviour are generated.... The dog is still unchanged dog; the gibbon is still gibbon...and yet, clearly something has happened. Patterns of interaction have been generated or discovered.

Gregory Bateson
Mind and Nature © 1979 by Gregory Bateson

Child development through play

by Raimundo Dinello

CREATED in Sweden, the United States and Switzerland, the first toy libraries were institutions which lent out games and toys. Their counterparts in Latin America, known as *ludotecas*, are something quite different in that their centre of interest has shifted away from games and toys towards the players, who are offered a range of play activities.

In societies suffering from chronic economic crisis, the creation of institutions for play may seem like a luxury. In the name of this misconception those children who most need to play are often deprived of the opportunity to do so. With its interaction between communication and creative expression, freedom and self-discipline, play is extremely valuable in child development and in helping children to fully belong to their culture and society.

Latin American *ludotecas* seek to do more than fill the gaps in the formal education system. The experience of the network of *ludotecas* extending from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego which has been set up under the auspices of the Federación Latinoamericana de Ludotecas (FLALU), created in 1986 on the initiative of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay, shows that they can also help to solve some serious problems of the Third World, such as dropping out of school, illiteracy, juvenile delinquency and marginalization.

Making toys from scrap materials or using local craft techniques, inventing disguises, games of skill and competitions, discovering nature and the environment, as well as introductory courses in music, theatre and dance, are just a few of the activities offered by these institutions which give pride of place to imagination and initiative.

Most Latin American *ludotecas* are associated with projects to combat marginalization. They operate in conjunction with educators and sociocultural workers, but in most cases it is the community associations that decide to set them up and run them. Whether it forms part of an extracurricular education project, of the social development centre of a poor district, or of a children's dispensary, each *ludoteca* has its own methods of work and its own objectives. But they all have a social and educational function, the idea being that play will encourage the development of more creative, self-reliant individuals, better equipped to contribute to society.

One notable example is the *ludoteca* started in the big top of a circus as part of an itinerant cultural programme in Brazil's mining district. The creative and organizational abilities that both child and adult participants discovered in themselves thanks to the *ludoteca* led to the establishment of an association to improve living conditions in the neighbourhood. ■

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Play and the sacred in Africa

by Barthélemy Comoe-Krou

In 1817 Hegel wrote that "only man is capable of being religious. An animal can no more be religious than it can understand law or morality." But, he added, where Africa is concerned, "What we call religion, the state...none of that yet exists for them.... In Africa all men are magicians". This belief led the British ethnologists Edward Burnett Tylor and James George Frazer to say that "magic preceded religion",[1] while the British naturalist and prehistorian John Lubbock declared that there were "races of men totally lacking in religion".

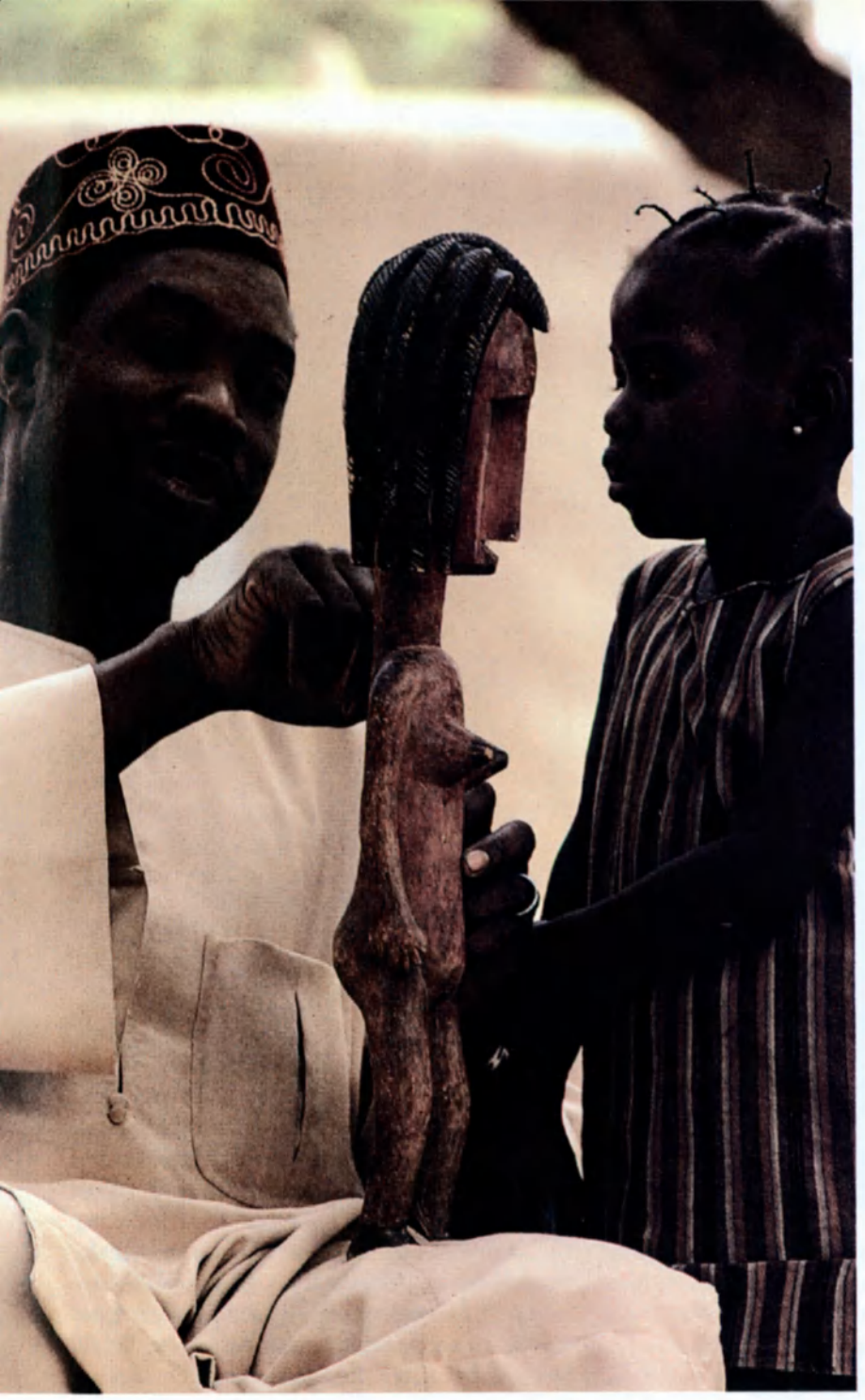
It was demonstrated scientifically that "even insects play",[2] and at the same time it was said that primitive peoples, including the Africans, had no games.[3] Lubbock did not know "any children of savages who have played with a rattle".[4]

However by around 1870 the law of the three states or stages set forth by Auguste Comte in 1839 had been generally accepted. Comte held that the evolution of human thought and knowledge passes through three main stages: the religious stage during which all phenomena are explained by reference to supernatural agents, the metaphysical stage, and the scientific stage. Tylor, and after him Lewis Morgan, then set forth a law of evolution by virtue of which societies inevitably moved from savagery to barbarism, and from barbarism to civilization. Savagery naturally came to be associated with the religious stage and civilization with the scientific stage.

Play and magic

As a result savages and primitive peoples suddenly began to be considered more religious than civilized peoples. Their whole existence was suffused, as it were, with religion. It was also discovered that games did after all exist in these societies. And since it continued to be held that primitive peoples were incapable of invention, these games were said to be derived from religious or magic rites. Lubbock said that primitive peoples considered the rattle to be a "sacred and mysterious object."

In 1917, the Swedish anthropologist Yrjö Hirn extended this thesis to all manifestations of



Above, Bambara statuette representing a female ancestor figure (Mali). Opposite page, a ritual white wood statuette of the Ewe people of Togo perpetuates the memory of a dead twin sister.

play by children in all societies. In 1938 the French ethnologist Marcel Griaule used it in a study of the games of the Dogon people in which he wrote that "When adults are asked about the significance of anthropomorphic statuettes with religious or magical uses, they sometimes say that the statuettes are children's dolls. Even at Yougo, the sacred cliff-side city, a blacksmith...maintained that he often carved them for children, but this seems doubtful.... His claim is quite interesting in itself, however, since it reveals the narrow gap through which an object slips from religion to play."[5]

Roger Caillois, another disciple of Hirn, wrote in 1958 that "A number of games are based on forgotten beliefs or reproduce the form but not the content of rites no longer practised."[6] He concluded that "A sense of play is essential to culture but in history games and toys have always been the residues of culture, misunderstood survivals of bygone ways or borrowings from foreign cultures which lose their meaning when transposed, and never seem relevant to the functioning of the society in which their presence is recorded."[7]

Even in the nineteenth century there was some hostility to the theses outlined above, but its impact was limited. As far as I know, the Taylor/Hirn theory was only refuted by Charles Béart between 1950 and 1970 as part of what might be called an epistemological purge. "What more can be said," wrote Béart, "when we are shown dressed, articulated dolls exactly like those we know in the world's oldest hypogea?... Even when the maidens of Attica fastened dolls to trees at the festivals of Icaria, these were dolls and not sacred statues. Antiquity no more confused a doll with a statuette of Tanagra or a Mithraic ex-voto than we would confuse a doll with a piece of Sèvres porcelain or a plaster saint. In regions where Christianity has lost much of its influence and where many religious statuettes lie forgotten in the attic, no little girl would ever dream of using such a statuette as a doll... A little Dogon girl would be no more likely to use as a doll a statuette carved for the altar of her ancestors than a little Parisian girl would do so with the plastic statuette of the Virgin that once adorned her grandmother's bedroom. Dolls inhabit their own special world. There may be a temptation to link this world to the sacred world, but there is no historical justification for doing so."[4]

The creative impulse

In all human societies there are joke-words and words that serve as prayers or blessings and thus express the sacred. No-one could seriously maintain that jokes are derived from words of prayer. Yet this has been and still is done with regard to play. Words, like all the material elements used by a society, can be used for different purposes. Wood can be used as firewood or to make games, chairs and houses. It can also be carved to make sacred statuettes representing ancestors or spirits. These are different expressions of different ideas.

Like all ideas and thoughts, the sacred is made manifest by physical expressions—a resonant flow of words, pieces of vegetable or mineral matter, living beings, people. These entities already existed in nature in what might be called a neutral state before they were used to express the sacred, themselves becoming sacred objects in the process, or before being used in play, before becoming toys or material for games. Sacred objects and material for games are both products of the human creative impulse. They are cultural data that exist in society. What possible interrelations could there possibly be between the social

"Dolls inhabit their own special world. There may be a temptation to link this world to the sacred world, but there is no historical justification for doing so".

expression of play and the social expression of the sacred?

Play, outside of both law and religion

If someone happens to break a leg during a children's or adolescents' game, people simply say: "They were only playing", and the matter is closed. There is no complaint or punishment. If a boxer dies as a result of injuries received during a match his opponent need not worry even though he has in fact committed murder. What happens if the sacred is involved?

In the villages of Africa children and teenagers are not allowed to play violent or noisy games in the main street. Such games are only allowed in an area far from the dwellings which is officially regarded as a playing field. If a woman returning from the well with a jar on her head ventures onto the playing field and is jostled so that the jar falls to the ground and breaks, then she is the one who will be blamed, since "he who unrolls his mat on the public highway is more guilty than he who tramples on it."

However, if a diviner wearing his emblems of office sets foot on the field the adolescents will stand aside to let him pass. If he is jostled, the parents of the culprits will immediately go and apologize and make the appropriate offerings to ward off misfortune.

Sometimes a false diviner is unmasked. The impostor is considered a liar, a cheat and a blasphemer, and is publicly mocked. If, as often happens, he is an outsider to the village, he will be expelled from it. The children ridicule his gestures, his dances, chants and utterances. Could this be the "narrow gap" through which a piece of behaviour "slips from religion to play"? Not at all. The children are laughing at a liar, not turning a religious act into a game. The false diviner is not a religious man, he is a man who has cheated at religion just as one can cheat at games. The children would never dare to imitate a real diviner. His "spirit" would hear their chants and see their dances and would "fall upon them" (put them into a trance), exposing them to serious illness or even death.

A fetish is not a toy

Historians today unanimously accept that, long before they came into contact with the monotheistic religions, the peoples of black Africa acknowledged the existence of an all-powerful Supreme Being, who had created the world and was morally pure and infinitely good. Like African hospitality, to which it is directly linked, the idea of a Supreme Being is unfortunately disappearing.

Out of respect, Africans will not address the Supreme Being directly. They approach Him by way of his subordinate spirits which may inhabit natural elements such as mountains, forests and rivers or via manufactured objects commonly known as fetishes. If these fetishes are defined as objects from which protection is expected, how do they differ from the holy water, scapularies, miraculous medals and relics to which Europeans are so attached?

Whatever the truth of this, for Africans no fetish is absolute. It can be "spoiled" and lose its power. When the spirit has left it, the object is no longer sacred and is discarded. Does this mean that children can use it as a toy? Never! It is often said that human beings are only afraid of what they do not understand. Familiarity casts out fear. When people knew that a good spirit dwelt in an object and that they could expect protection from it, they were at ease with the fetish. But once the good spirit went away, whatever the reason, there was no guarantee that a wicked spirit had not taken up residence there.

A desacralized object can never return to the neutral state which it possessed before it became

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In a Senegalese village, women make fun of men's wrestling matches.

sacred. This is what Béart noted in the case of the religious statuettes that lie forgotten in French attics. Take the case of a priest who leaves the priesthood or a nun who leaves her Order. People are always whispering behind their backs: "He used to be a priest, he's an unfrocked priest, she used to be a nun..." Their religious life has left indelible traces on them. This is the natural attitude of all human beings—whether primitive or civilized—faced with what is holy, even those who claim they are no longer believers.

Although play and holiness both proceed from the idea of divinity, they are mutually exclusive and can never be present together.

War games and peace games

Ethnologists have been led astray by constant reference to Greco-Roman civilization as a model for all other civilizations. Today we talk of children's games, athletic games and Olympic games. But ancient Greek and Latin had no generic term that covered all these meanings. *Agon*, from which the verb *agonizomai*, meaning to fight, combat or compete is derived, designates games played in a stadium and exercises to prepare for war that were closely linked to worship of a god (Apollo at Delphi, Zeus at Olympia). The Latin word *ludi* has a similar meaning. *Agon* and *ludus* are the origin of modern sport, the different disciplines of which are called games.

The French word *jeu*, which is derived not from *ludus* but from *jocus*—revels, joking and jesting—is closer to the majority of African words used to designate this phenomenon whose expressions have nothing to do with the sacred.

An old proverb says: "When the Moon rises all Africa dances". In the past African children, adolescents, young men and girls would dance and play on days of rest and moonlit nights. This intense and continuous exercise of play was the reflexion of a social state. Those who took part were well-fed, healthy and joyful, for this was a time when even sub-Saharan Africa had enough food. Another old proverb says: "If a child owns a pool, we fish there for him, not for ourselves." This principle acts as a guarantee of the social peace which is a pre-condition of inner peace, mutual confidence and the enjoyment of play.

We can thus conclude that, in African society, and probably in all other societies too, play is not derived from expressions of the sacred. It would be more accurate to say that man's conception of divinity determines his overall behaviour, of which play is only one element. One might even say, "Tell me who your God is and I will tell you who you are and what games you play." ■

1. Robert H. Lowie, *History of Classical Ethnology.*
2. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex.*
3. Charles Béart, *Jeux et jouets de l'Ouest africain,* Dakar, IFAN 1955.
4. Charles Béart, "Histoire des jeux" in *Jeux et sports,* Encyclopédie de la Pléiade, vol. XXIII, Paris, Gallimard, 1967.
5. Marcel Griaule, *Jeux dogon,* Musée de l'Homme, Paris 1938.
6. Roger Caillois, *Les jeux et les hommes,* Paris, Gallimard 1958.
7. Roger Caillois, "Nature et jeux" in *Jeux et sports,* Encyclopédie de la Pléiade, vol. XXIII, Paris, Gallimard, 1967.

Games without fun

by Jean d'Ormesson

Commercial and technological pressures are turning modern sport into a ruthlessly competitive industry

At first sight games, sport and play seem so similar as to be indistinguishable. People play tennis, rugby and baseball. The loftiest expression of competition in sport bears an illustrious centuries-old name: the Olympic Games. Play is a form of sport, and sport is a kind of play. But on closer inspection the illusion of identity between play and sport is soon shattered. Far from being similar, they start to look like opposites. Play has something spontaneous and unorganized about it, whereas sport is governed by rules. It is true that a game such as chess is also codified by very strict rules; and that, conversely, a sport such as walking has very few. The matter becomes confusing. As so often, looking closely at apparently simple, obvious ideas (which in fact conceal a lurking element of linguistics and philosophy) leads to mental confusion. But let us try to be clear.

Play is so ancient that its origins are lost in the earliest history of mankind. And it goes even further back. Monkeys, cats, dolphins—most animals and their young ones play. Nobody is going to maintain that animals engage in sports, but it is obvious that they play. In a well-known French film, *La Guerre du feu,* we witness the birth of laughter and speech in our most remote forebears. Even in those distant times play occupied an important place. Ontogeny repeats phylogeny: i.e. the development of the individual passes through the same stages as the development of the species. From their earliest years children play, alone or in groups, with things or with their hands, without ever having had a single lesson. They are not thinking of taking part in a sport, developing their physique, competing with others, or breaking records: but they play. People in all cultures, latitudes and periods, however serious their preoccupations and duties, will go on playing—till their dying day. Indeed, it may be that the loftier their functions the more important play is for them. A head of state with his guard of honour, his protocol and his personal style perhaps does more playing than a tramp does.

All the world's a game, with obscure rules

The multifarious activities we call play, apparently so simple yet actually so complex, have interested philosophers, historians, psychologists, sociologists and ethnologists. They have a bearing on religion, war, science, technology, culture and art. The whole world ends up looking rather like a great big game, with obscure rules involving every one of us.

Play is ubiquitous; and in one form or another has probably been a feature of every successive civilization. Bull-running, still a feature of Spanish culture, was practised in ancient Crete. The ball games of the Aztecs, played on holy pitches called *tlatchi,* combined the blood of their defeated enemies and a highly-developed religious symbolism. The famous *buzkashi* of the Afghans, a kind of polo played with the carcass of a goat, has inspired novels in many languages. Basque *pelota,* Moroccan *fantasia,* Japanese martial arts, aquatic processions such as those on the Grand Canal at Venice, the famous *palio* at Siena, the Carnival of Giants in Belgium and northern France—all these and many more are popular regional manifestations of universal play. UNESCO set out recently to preserve and make known these valuable and varied features of national identity. Like so many monuments in Greece, Italy, Cambodia, India, China, Mexico and elsewhere, they too are part of mankind's cultural heritage.

Again, we cannot help being struck by the enormous variety of games. Among the old

Above, javelin thrower painted on a Greek drinking cup (5th century BC). Opposite page, a Chinese gymnast at an international tournament held at Corbeil (France) in 1989.

traditional types, some have to do with religion, others with the collective memory, social dissent and violence. Others again are obviously the forerunners of sport. These are all group games, imbued with history, religion and culture. But then there are all the innumerable children's games, card games, games of chance, chess, charades, word games and helter-skelter. It is enough to make one's head go round. To introduce a little order into this medley, Roger Caillois, a French sociologist who for many years held a post at UNESCO, suggested a classification of games.

From competition to vertigo

Building on the foundations laid by Johan Huizinga, Rector of the University of Leyden between the wars and author of a seminal book about games, *Homo Ludens,* published in 1938,

...Examined more closely, however, the contrast between play and seriousness proves to be neither conclusive nor fixed. We can say: play is non-seriousness. But apart from the fact that this proposition tells us nothing about the positive qualities of play, it is extraordinarily easy to refute.

...First and foremost, all play is a voluntary activity. Play to order is no longer play.

Johan Huizinga
Homo Ludens. A study of the play-element in culture
© Roy Publishers, 1950.

Caillois divided games into four main categories: *agon* (the Greek word meaning competition); *alea* (the Latin word for chance); mimicry; and *ilinx* or vertigo. These main categories, according to Caillois, were influenced to a greater or lesser degree either by what Caillois called *paidia* (from the Greek for childhood) or by what he called *ludus* (Latin for play), that is, either by the elemental force of improvisation and exhilaration or by a taste for gratuitous regulated difficulty.

Sport obviously comes under the heading of *ludus* (gratuitous regulation) rather than of *paidia* (uncoordinated movement). Imitation plays little part in sport: and chance certainly needs to be kept out of it. Sport has a lot to do with vertigo, and even more with competition: the ancient Greeks taught us in the Olympic games that sport is primarily competition, regulated as strictly as possible.

Sport is born of play, in its infinite variety. It satisfies the body's urge to surpass others, and itself. Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who revived the Olympic Games of ancient Greece, defined it as going faster, further, higher and harder. It is human to want to transcend others (and oneself) but in accordance with arbitrary rules. Thus sport is a form of play, and also a peaceful imitation of war, and a set of moral standards into the bargain.

Money invades sport

What is now happening is that under the threefold influence of money, technology and advertising, sport is being taken over by increasingly harsh and exclusive competition. Technology is becoming more and more important in what was once a matter of emulation between amateurs. Money invaded sport in a big way some years ago. Television, whilst helping to propagate

Right, *buzkashi*, a traditional Afghan game played on horseback.
Below, a football crowd in Milan (Italy).

	AGON (competition)	ALEA (chance)	MIMICRY	ILINX (vertigo)
PAIDIA				
noise agitation laughter	races wrestling etc.	nursery rhymes heads or tails	childish imitations	roundabouts swings
kites patience crosswords	boxing fencing football draughts chess	betting roulette lottery	dressing up acting	fairground attractions skiing mountaineering

and popularize sport, also serves to arouse passions and turn games into shows. The chauvinism involved in some football matches and tennis tournaments, plus the atmosphere of violence surrounding some sporting occasions, means that sport is no longer a game but a feverish ultra-modern industry—and an industry dominated by ruthless competition often involving huge financial interests. When Baron de Coubertin revived the Olympic Games, he naturally put the stress on emulation, but he emphasized that what matters is not winning but taking part—thus keeping them as *games.* Nowadays this aspect is fast disappearing under the impact of big money, the influence of advertising and the ruthless use of high technology to defeat one's opponent.

Following the American historian and sociologist E. Weber, who has carried out research into traditional forms of play, Pierre Parlebas has pointed out that with the advent of modern sport traditional games have gradually disappeared. To put it another way, the higher the stakes the less important the game. The spontaneous and joyful effervescence that Caillois called *paidia* is losing ground to *ludus,* a system of arbitrary albeit constricting rules. Competition, which in games consisted of excelling oneself, now consists of setting records and beating a rival who is often ridiculed and even hated. The high stakes in modern sport banish the fraternal and disinterested delight in the game.

Sport is a fundamental activity in the modern world, casting its spell over its many participants and spectators. We must not allow it to be swamped by money, debased by violence, or cause hostility between nations, regions, cities and clubs. It must remain exhilarating, pure, young and dignified. It must become play once more.

UNESCO has done much, particularly in the context of the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1998), to propagate and preserve traditional games. With active help from the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport and the International Fund for the Development of Physical Education and Sport (see page 38), it has also turned its attention to the problems of sport that receives a very high degree of media coverage and faces the threat of violence. UNESCO has, for instance, stressed the notion of fair play, the spirit of generosity and impartiality in games played for their own sake rather than to win. Instead of violence, the appeal of financial gain at all costs, and dehumanized technology, this means going back to the idea of pleasure which is disappearing in the harsh world of high technology, and to an ethic in which an opponent is a human being to be respected rather than an obstacle to be flattened.

A pelota player depicted in a frieze from the ancient Maya city of Chichen Itza, Mexico.

Sport must continue to combine enthusiasm and regulation, exhilaration and effort, pleasure and moral standards. It must remain a game in which emulation is essentially a mark of harmony and complicity.

Obviously not all games are sports. Poker, the theatre, roulette, crossword puzzles and punning hardly fall within the category. But all sports must remain games—games calling for effort, persistence and courage, sometimes for heroism. The great thing about sport is that physical pleasure is transmogrified into moral standards. In a freedom that accepts constraints, it makes rules for itself in order the better to surpass itself. Violence, cheating, self-interest and hatred are offside. Sport is a matter of struggling, emulating, competing and surpassing. It must also above all be a matter of friendship, happiness and coming to terms with oneself and others—for it is above all a game. Adults—like the children they once were—should play only to be happy. People only ever play with their own kind. Sport, like play, is a fraternity. ■

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The International Fund for the Development of Physical Education and Sport (FIDEPS)

FIDEPS was set up in 1978 by UNESCO's General Conference with the object of helping the most disadvantaged of its Member States to implement the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport. According to the Charter, "Every human being has a fundamental right of access to physical education and sport, which are essential for the full development of his personality (...) Physical education and sport contribute to the maintenance and improvement of health (and) provide a wholesome leisure-time occupation (...) At the community level, they enrich social relations and develop fair play, which is essential not only to sport itself but also to life in society".

In the industrialized countries between 80 and 85 per cent of children receive physical education at school, while in the developing countries, where there are very few sports facilities and personnel, almost the same proportion are deprived of it. In Europe and North America there is often one sportsground per 1,000 inhabitants, whereas in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America there are no more than a few dozen poorly equipped sportsfields.

In so far as its resources allow, and thanks to the contributions it receives from public and private sources, FIDEPS helps countries and institutions on request to train physical education teachers and instructors and technical personnel, to acquire basic facilities and equipment, to organize sporting and cultural events and to protect and develop traditional games and sports.

Sport and play

by Georges Magnane

Have the critics of modern sport gone too far?

MODERN sport has been criticized by many writers who have expressed their disapproval of those sporting activities that no longer contain an element of play. They maintain that, whether the element of play has been destroyed by too serious an approach or has simply degenerated into childishness, what is left is no longer a game but what the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga called its "grimace".

If competitive sport really did extinguish the spirit of play, we should unhesitatingly suggest that it be banned. But careful consideration suggests that training for sport, whatever the level, does not deserve so severe a condemnation.

Even professional and amateur stars of such particularly demanding sports as soccer, cycling or boxing have not necessarily ceased to consider themselves as people at play. One might even say that those athletes who are the hardest on themselves and approach their task with the zest of an artist, only succeed if they keep the sense of boundless freedom and audacity which alone can produce the spark of genius—in artists we would call it inspiration—that allows them to surpass themselves. And that is precisely the attitude of the adult or child who plays just for the fun of it.

Exceptional sporting achievements—records, victories in international matches or the Olympics—are to athletes what masterpieces are to artists. The poet Guillaume Apollinaire once wrote that "Artists are above all else men who want to become inhuman". Adapting his formula, one might say that champions are men trying to make themselves superhuman. In attempting to achieve something extraordinary—something that Huizinga, speaking of poetry, described as "exorbitant"—the champion is demonstrating play's highest vocation, which is to surmount human nature.

Never mind, then, if the faint-hearted or ill-informed find training cruel or frightening. As long as the athletes themselves fix the amount of effort they put into it, they are free and can be said to be playing....

Anyone who practises a competitive sport voluntarily and conscientiously for a single season has an opportunity to realize that training has an element of play in it. However completely athletes submit to the demands of their trainers, they never forget that they have freely chosen this apparent passivity. They know that they can withdraw from the situation if they want to. But the chances are that they won't. The humiliation of quitting would be too great, so a sense of honour keeps them from giving in to discouragement or irritation.

Athletes thus voluntarily submit to an apprenticeship that can justifiably be called work. But it might just as accurately be described as play, since it serves no useful purpose. It was not the "serious" aspect of training that Huizinga had in mind when he complained that the spirit of play had virtually disappeared. He himself had written, after all, that "Play can perfectly well have a serious element". In fact it is only when athletes lose their freedom that the element of play disappears.

The French philosopher Alain (Emile Chartier) defined the difference between work and play thus: "If what matters is the action itself, it is play; if the main thing is the purpose achieved by the action, then it becomes work." The entirely unproductive activity of the sportsman or woman would be the best possible illustration of his point, but the antithesis he draws seems less than convincing.

Training is both a playful kind of work and an industrious form of play. There is no clear dividing line between work and play. Some might argue that amateurs play whereas professionals work, but that would be a gross oversimplification. A few minutes' conversation with

Above, soccer on the beach, 120 km south of Dakar (Senegal).

professional athletes is enough to show that their attitudes are not necessarily different from those of amateurs. Professionals only keep the qualities that have brought them success if they do not lose the special kind of enthusiasm, akin to a state of grace, which only exists in play.

Work becomes play if the worker does it for its own sake, without considering the results. When Aldous Huxley wrote "Work is fun, of course", he was thinking of work which people do willingly because it is the thing they do best. He was talking about the work of a writer, which he knew to be an end in itself. True writers put pen to paper because they need to write, regardless of whether they will get fabulous royalties for their efforts or none at all. In the same way, true sportsmen and sportswomen compete to enjoy a sense of achievement, because the game is their vocation.

So the distinction between amateur and professional seems relatively unimportant, if not actually a red herring. Instead of evaluating the payments made to star players, we should examine the conditions in which sports are practised. When they take part in the sport they love, athletes give of their best without being paid. They play for the sake of playing; and in so doing they experience that sense of freedom and potential that can transform people profoundly enough to deserve the name of culture.

For sport, like any other form of play, is a cultural activity. In *Les jeux et les hommes*, the French thinker Roger Caillois recalls how when he read Huizinga's book *Homo Ludens*, he began to wonder whether "Everything might have started with play". Although he goes on to reject such an exclusive hypothesis, he still claims elsewhere in the book that "Culture and play are consubstantial".

There is an obvious similarity between attitudes associated with play and attitudes associated with culture. Both allow man to achieve spontaneity. Never mind whether this spontaneity is the result of a miracle or of long effort. The discoveries of poets and scientists can be made in either way, but the sublime moments of discovery are always accompanied by the burning enthusiasm and the sense of doing something for its own sake that characterize play.

Doubtless sport is not one of the major conduits of culture. It is one of them, nevertheless, and it is accessible to great numbers of people, not just the tiny, gifted minority whose performances are celebrated as masterpieces. Those who take part in sport at any level experience the same emotions, the same moments of triumphant freedom.

A love of accuracy and the search for balance and control are essential preconditions for any kind of cultural activity. Those who do not discipline themselves firmly right from the start will never travel far along the path of knowledge.

Spectators at sporting events want to know every detail of the rules of the game they are watching so that they miss nothing and understand everything that happens on the pitch. A French factory worker explained his love of sport in this way: "At least you're sure to see something real. Everything happens before your eyes."

Tense moment in a basketball game at the Seoul Olympic Games (Republic of Korea) in 1988.

Sporting events constitute a system of evaluation which is offered to the public. This explains the extraordinary atmosphere on the terraces. The cry of 100,000 spectators swelling up like a sudden storm is the modern equivalent of the catharsis the ancient Greeks expected from classical drama. The sporting public is wildly generous in its enthusiasms; it offers its applause without reservations, because it has complete confidence in what is happening on the pitch. As the factory worker said, the spectator feels he is taking part in something real....

Complaints about excessive publicity accorded to some stars of sport, the persistence of the old controversy about professionalism, the disdain that many intellectuals still show for physical exercise—all these factors suggest a malaise, a feeling of guilt on the part of the community as it is forced to recognize the extent of the social problems posed by sport. Everyone seems to underestimate the importance of the element of play.

If sport loses touch with its origins and ceases to be first and foremost a game, it may become a kind of drug and stir up increasingly violent emotions while also stripping them of all their deeper significance.

Yet this malaise does not seem particularly alarming. It is only a question of growing pains, and if these sometimes seem to be catastrophic, it is because the growth has been rapid, hasty and disorganized. Modern sport is a colossal and sometimes overwhelming phenomenon. For the time being, however, the colossus is in pretty good shape. ■

Encyclopédie de la Pléiade, vol. XXIII, Gallimard, 1967

WAR AND PEACE

The Madrid-based International Institute of Mediterranean Theatre is planning to stage a series of plays on the theme *Mediterranean, Violence and Peace,* in order to illustrate the treatment of war in the theatre. Aeschylus's tragedy *The Persians,* Aristophanes's comedy *The Peace,* and an adaptation of French novelist Marguerite Yourcenar's *Memoirs of Hadrian* are among the works which will be staged in France, Greece, Italy and Spain between August and November 1991.

FISHY ENGINEERING

Fish have become favourite subjects for genetic engineering because they lend themselves to it more easily than mammals. With a view to solving world food problems, species have been developed with a rapid growth-rate or a high resistance to heat, cold and disease. But fears have been expressed that a proliferation of new species of fish, unless rigorously controlled, may endanger the equilibrium of aquatic ecosystems.

THE SATELLITES OF URANUS

In a study recently published in the scientific journal *Nature,* two astronomers from the University of London report that Uranus may have as many as 25 still unobserved satellites or moons. Their argument is based on images of the rings of Uranus taken by the interplanetary probe Voyager 2 in 1986. The sharp-edged structure of the rings led them to deduce the presence of these satellites, estimated at some 20 km in diameter, the gravitational force of which would counteract the tendency of the rings to spread.

HEALTHIER TREES

Scientists at the Aubonne Valley Arboretum in Switzerland, which seeks to save rare tree species from extinction, have discovered that sheets of a textured polypropylene known as Plantex laid around the base of trees can protect them from weeds, insects and plant diseases. The material is porous and thus allows air, water and fertilizer to reach the roots.

WAR ON THE SCREWWORM

A campaign in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to eradicate the New World screwworm *Cochliomyia hominivorax* (literally, "devourer of man"), a livestock pest which recently arrived in the country, has entered a decisive phase. With technical and financial aid from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), hundreds of millions of laboratory-reared male screwworm flies rendered sterile through radiation have been released into the infested zones. When these flies mate with wild females, the eggs fail to hatch and the population soon dies out. It is hoped that this technique, which in the 1950s was used to eliminate screwworm from the USA, most of Mexico and several Caribbean islands, will yield rapid results and stop the pest from spreading to other countries.

SOLAR COOKING

A cooker which runs on solar power has been developed by American scientists. It consists of a wooden box lined with insulating material and fitted with a glass door. Inside, a metal plate covered with aluminium foil captures the heat of the sun. On a very sunny day, the temperature in the cooker can rise to over 150°C. In rural areas of developing countries, this type of apparatus could be used to help reduce firewood consumption and lower the incidence of respiratory and skin infections caused by more rudimentary cooking methods.

DANISH MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Experimentarium, opened in Copenhagen early this year, is a museum where children and adults alike can discover the world of science and technology. The largest institution of its kind in Northern Europe (4,000 m^2), the Experimentarium will not only present exhibitions but also encourage cultural and scientific exchanges and entertaining, hands-on learning.

THE ALHAMBRA LIONS AT RISK

Gamma ray and ultrasonic readings carried out over 2 years in the Court of the Lions in the Alhambra, Granada (Spain), by technicians from the University of Seville, have produced alarming data on the condition of the columns and the 12 white marble lions from which the Court takes its name. Experts are calling for urgent restoration work to be carried out on the Alhambra, which features on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

POLLUTED WATERS

The management of drinking water reserves is becoming a major ecological problem in most Latin American countries. For example, water from the river Rocha, which runs through the Bolivian city of Cochabamba, cannot be used for consumption or even irrigation without prior treatment. Uncontrolled discharge of sewage and waste water, environmental degradation and scarce water resources also plague the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires; while in São Paulo, Brazil, the main source of water is becoming unfit for human consumption as indiscriminate dumping of sewage in the rivers contaminates reservoirs.

MUSIC FOR THE BLIND

Eleven countries of the European Community were represented at a Congress of Braille Music Libraries held in Amsterdam (Netherlands), last January. The Congress decided to compile an international catalogue of the Braille music scores published in the participating countries.

HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

UNESCO has organized an international conference on new roles for higher education, to be held in Caracas (Venezuela) on 2 and 3 May 1991. The conference, to be opened by the Venezuelan President and the Director-General of Unesco, will be attended by a number of Nobel Prizewinners and some 200 education experts from Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States, Canada, Japan and Europe.

AN INDO-EUROPEAN PROTOLANGUAGE?

The great Indo-European linguistic family includes most Indo-Iranian and European languages. It was long thought that these diverse languages all grew from a single source—a people living in Central Europe around 3000 BC. But, according to two Soviet specialists, there are certain linguistic clues indicating that long before this period an Indo-European protolanguage was spoken in the southern Caucasus region. Their hypothesis is supported by the fact that in all Indo-European languages there are words for certain plants (beech, oak) and animals (monkey, leopard, lion) which did not exist in 3000 BC in Northern Europe but were widespread in the Near East.

INFORMATICS INTERNATIONAL

The International Colloquium on Automata, Languages and Programming (ICALP), which the European Association for Theoretical Computer Science organizes annually in conjunction with a European university, will be held this year (8 to 12 July) at the Complutense University of Madrid. The university will also be the venue for the 12th triennial World Computer Congress in 1992 (7 to 11 September), organized by the International Federation for Information Processing.

The Dogon, Mali's people of the cliffs

by Caroline Haardt

Above, Dogon village at the foot of the Bandiagara cliffs.

WITHIN the loop of the Niger River in Mali, between the town of Mopti and the Burkina Faso border, there is a place where steep cliffs at the edge of an arid plateau dominate a sandy plain. Over 500 metres high in places, the escarpment is fissured with deep ravines, where rain caught in the cracks of the grey rock supports the growth of dense and varied vegetation. This is the Land of the Dogon, whose natural features alone would justify exceptional measures of protection.

Against the rock face and on the scree slope below, the Dogon have built villages which are remarkable for their architecture and for the profoundly original culture of those who live in them, described by the French ethnologist Marcel Griaule as a "relic of a lost Africa". In 1989, an area of some 350,000 to 400,000 hectares along the Bandiagara cliffs, including almost 250 traditional villages, was placed on UNESCO's World Heritage List as a site of outstanding natural and cultural importance.

The Dogon, who today number about 300,000, are of Malinke (Mandingo) stock. Their ancestors are thought to have fled from the Keita empire in the fifteenth century and found refuge at the Bandiagara cliffs, where they displaced another people, the Tellem, who left behind abundant evidence of

their own cultural traditions in tombs set in caves in the rock face.

Most of these caves can only be reached with the aid of ropes and crampons. Some have been explored in the past decade, and have revealed interesting evidence of the highly developed techniques, especially for weaving, which had been employed by the Tellem since the Iron Age.

On the cliffs themselves, aspects of Dogon ritual and cosmogony are illustrated by cryptic signs and paintings, the best-known of which adorn the famous "Shelter of Masks", at the village of Songo (fifteen kilometres from Bandiagara), which forms part of the World Heritage site.

The Pale Fox, bringer of anarchy

According to Dogon cosmogony, from the union of the supreme deity Amma and his creation, the Earth, issued a being known as the Pale Fox. Unique and imperfect, the Fox introduced the principle of disorder into creation. It is associated with human weakness and the anarchy inherent in the universe. Amma also created Nommo, a hermaphroditic creature who represents celestial harmony and is linked symbolically to water and to fecundity. Then Amma modelled a human couple from clay. They gave birth to the eight ancestors of the Dogon, whom Nommo taught to speak.

Every aspect of Dogon domestic, social and economic life is linked to this cosmogony. Villages are designed in the image of the cosmos. Built on rock in order to preserve scarce arable land, they are laid out on a north-south axis in the form of a prone human body, supposedly that of Nommo, the great ancestor. The head is represented by the *togu na* (literally, "big shelter"), a meeting-place reserved for men. This open-sided structure is always the first to be built in a new village. It consists of a platform on which stand several rows of rough-hewn timber pillars that support a roof of branches topped by a thick mat of millet straw. The number of pillars has symbolic significance. Decisions taken in the *togu na* are solemn and irrevocable.

In each settlement there is also a large family dwelling, or *ginna*, which is reserved for the spiritual leader. Corresponding to Nommo's breast, this

building has a raised living area reached by a ladder carved from a tree trunk. The windowless facade is decorated with eighty niches, representing the eight original ancestors and their descendants. The two doors are often carved with rows of male and female figures which, like the niches, symbolize earlier generations.

Ordinary homes, which are smaller and are generally made of mud-brick, are grouped around the *ginna*. They are built to a rectangular design, with flat-roofed rooms opening onto an inner courtyard. They are flanked by granaries with distinctive conical thatched roofs. These structures are used for storing millet, seeds, rice, dried onions and various other foodstuffs. Their narrow entrances are protected by wooden doors, which are often carved and secured by ornate locks.

Many of the granaries are circular, like the houses at the edge of the village where menstruating women are sequestered. The forge, and the homes of members of various artisan castes—blacksmiths, wood and leather workers and griots—are also on the outskirts. Those who farm the land are the aristocrats of this patriarchal, agrarian society.

Almost all the villages, and certainly the oldest ones, possess one or more shrines, whose walls are decorated with totems or chessboard patterns. The most venerated of these shrines, which are square chambers in the rock containing altars, are protected by the *hogon*, a spiritual leader who serves several villages and who formerly dispensed justice and presided over the council of elders that directed public affairs. Today he still conducts major religious ceremonies and transmits to posterity the people's myths and beliefs.

A century and a half ago the influence of Islam began to reach the Land of the Dogon from the neighbouring Tukulor and Fulani (Peul) peoples, nomadic pastoralists of the plain, and many of the villages now have mosques. Whether modest or imposing, the mosque is often built next to the *togu na*, which even among the Islamicized Dogon has kept the role of men's house and council chamber.

Statues and masks: a rich artistic heritage

Among the many different arts mastered by the Dogon, the most sacred is weaving, held to be the first art bestowed on humanity, at the same time as speech. In fact the Dogon have a single word for the two concepts, both of which are considered to have a question-and-answer structure. Griaule sees the act of weaving as a metaphor for culture itself: the warp represents uncultivated land; the weft, life-giving human activity.

But the aesthetic talents of the Dogon are probably best illustrated by their sculpture, whose primary purpose is ritualistic. Roughly carved or highly elaborate figures represent ancestors or mythical heroes. They are usually made by the village blacksmith, who also carves the wooden doors and shutters, while his wife is responsible for making pottery for ceremonial use.

Masks, associated with the spirits of the dead, are used only in funeral rites or to mark the end of a period of mourning, which may be celebrated either by public dances and ceremonies or by secret gatherings for initiates. The masks form part of a costume made of fabric or plant fibres, complete

with trimmings and accessories. They may be fashioned from wood, bark or braided fibres decorated with cowrie shells and painted designs, or topped with high crests like the *kanaga* mask, whose upper portion is shaped like a cross of Lorraine. Its two branches represent the demiurge Amma gesturing towards his creations, Earth and sky. ■

CAROLINE HAARDT, French journalist, was a staff member of UNESCO's Division of Cultural Heritage from 1983 to 1987. She is currently preparing an exhibition as part of the UNESCO Silk Roads project on the *Croisière Jaune*, a motor rally from Beirut to Tibet held in 1931-1932.

Above, sculptures representing the ancestors decorate the doorposts of Dogon dwellings. Middle photo this page, typical Dogon rectangular mud-brick houses and granaries with conical roofs. Top: a *togu na*, the men's house where the elders meet to take important decisions. The platform and the supporting pillars are decorated with symbols. Top left, masked figures enact a funeral rite. The celebrant at right is wearing a *kanaga* mask topped with a high crest in the shape of a cross of Lorraine.

A CULTURE IN DANGER

THE IMPACT OF TOURISM

The greatest threat to the Dogon heritage today is the gradual abandonment of the cliff villages, a process accelerated by the drought that has affected the Sahel region over the past twenty years. Shortage of water, and the hard labour involved in fetching it, have encouraged many of the Dogon to settle on the plain.

Another threat is looming with the arrival of large numbers of tourists. Some 5,000 visitors come to the Land of the Dogon every year. Unless it is properly controlled, this influx may lead to acculturation and social destabilization. Art-dealers and souvenir-hunters are buying up (often at ridiculously low prices) important archaeological objects including ladders, locks and carvings, thereby considerably impoverishing the artistic heritage. Already a growing number of masks are made for the tourist trade. In addition, many cult objects and masks are plundered. Once inaccessible, the cave burial grounds are no longer safe from tomb-robbers.

Every year the Land of the Dogon attracts more and more tourists to Mali, one of the world's poorest countries. In 1988 the government adopted a plan that took into account the area's fragility as well as its spectacular beauty. Measures have been taken to disperse tourist facilities by installing small camp-sites and cultural information points on a marked itinerary along the base of the cliffs. These facilities will be able to receive some 10,000 visitors a year while averting the problems that would arise if they were sited too close to the villages. The intention of the scheme is to minimize culture shock while making known the villages of the plain.

PRESERVING THE ARCHITECTURE

Safeguarding the building techniques displayed in the cliff villages, a living heritage transmitted by word of mouth, must be primarily a task for the Dogon themselves. But this will be pointless if the villages are uninhabited, and living conditions in them will have to improve if the exodus is to be staunched. New amenities such as wells, schools and dispensaries must be provided without delay.

The legal and constitutional measures aimed at protecting the Land of the Dogon should be reinforced. Laws protecting Mali's national heritage are already proving useful in this respect. At the international level, the country has made its position clear by ratifying the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1977, and, ten years later, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. ■

FURTHER READING ON THE DOGON

• M. Griaule. *Conversations with Ogotemmeli: Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas*, Galaxy Books, Oxford University Press, 1976.
• M. Griaule and G. Dieterlen. Le renard pâle ("The Pale Fox"), *Le mythe cosmogonique*, Vol. 1, Paris, 1965.
• D. Roberts. Mali's Dogon People. *National Geographic*, Vol. 178, No. 4, October 1990.
• *General History of Africa*, Vols. I and II, Heinemann/UNESCO, 1981.

Films

A number of films by Jean Rouch and Germaine Dieterlen.

After stopping off in Thailand and Indonesia, the *Fulk al-Salamah*, the Ship of Peace which is carrying UNESCO's Maritime Silk Roads expedition, approaches the coast of China, one of the highlights of its long voyage

The fabulous land of Cathay

by François-Bernard Huyghe

Above, the silk and ginger trade, a miniature from a 15th-century version of *The Travels of Marco Polo*. Opposite page left, the minaret of the Amin mosque (19th century), Turfan, Western China. This former trading-post on the Silk Road was the capital of the Uighur in the 8th-9th centuries. Opposite page right, 18th-century watercolour showing porcelain being packed before shipment to Europe.

On 8 February 1991, the *Fulk al-Salamah* set sail from Manila in the Philippines for the Chinese ports of Guangzhou and Quanzhou, formerly known as Canton and Zayton. Since leaving Oman we have been retracing the legendary voyage of Sindbad the Sailor, just as navigator Tim Severin did ten years ago at the helm of the *Sohar*, a replica of a traditional dhow fitted out by Sultan Qabus of Oman.

At lunchtime on that day the captain took the ship several miles off course in order to identify a curious immobile blip that had appeared on the radar screen. The blip turned out to be a junk—a vessel one could well imagine in an eighteenth-century painting. On board the craft, which was shipping water, were eight fishermen who, we later discovered, were from the Fujian region. One of the Chinese academics taking part in the expedition was drafted in as an interpreter. From the bridge of the *Fulk al-Salamah*, he called out to the hapless sailors through a loudhailer in their own dialect. We took them aboard and they told us that they had been blown 245 nautical miles off course and had been adrift for two weeks. Their engine and radio had broken down. They had had nothing to eat for five days, and no water for three. Soon they would have been too weak to bail out. When we arrived on the scene four sharks were already circling around the junk. An hour later, after being rescued, fed, showered, shaved and interviewed, the sailors were sleeping aboard our ship.

The next day we dropped them off at the port of Canton, and then made our way to the mouth of the Pearl River and the temple of the god of Nanhai, the South China Sea, who has protected voyagers from the perils of the sea since the sixth century. At the gate of the sanctuary is the statue of a "foreigner", possibly Bodhidharma, who introduced Great Vehicle Buddhism to China. When we sailed from Quanzhou on 19 February we

devoted our last morning in China to another divinity, thereby following the example of the foreign sailors who asked the protection of Heaven before embarking on their return journey. In the palace of the celestial empire, our hosts prayed to the wind and made a sacrifice to the sea-god, a rite which had not been performed for 600 years.

Surrounded by a host of romantic and exquisite things, how could we resist the fascination of China?

Where the Silk Roads began

Everything seemed to have been leading up to this. Throughout the voyage there had been constant reminders of the fabulous country where the Silk Roads began. Every museum contained objects which, directly or indirectly, through Arab or Indian intermediaries, the Middle Empire had despatched to the then known world.

Ever since we had left Oman, we had discovered traces of Zheng He, the admiral who at the beginning of the fifteenth century led a vast fleet to display the power of the Ming dynasty. We had also come across traces of the itinerant monks Faxian, Xuanzang and Yjing who, between the fourth and the seventh centuries, set out for India in search of the purity of Buddhist doctrine.

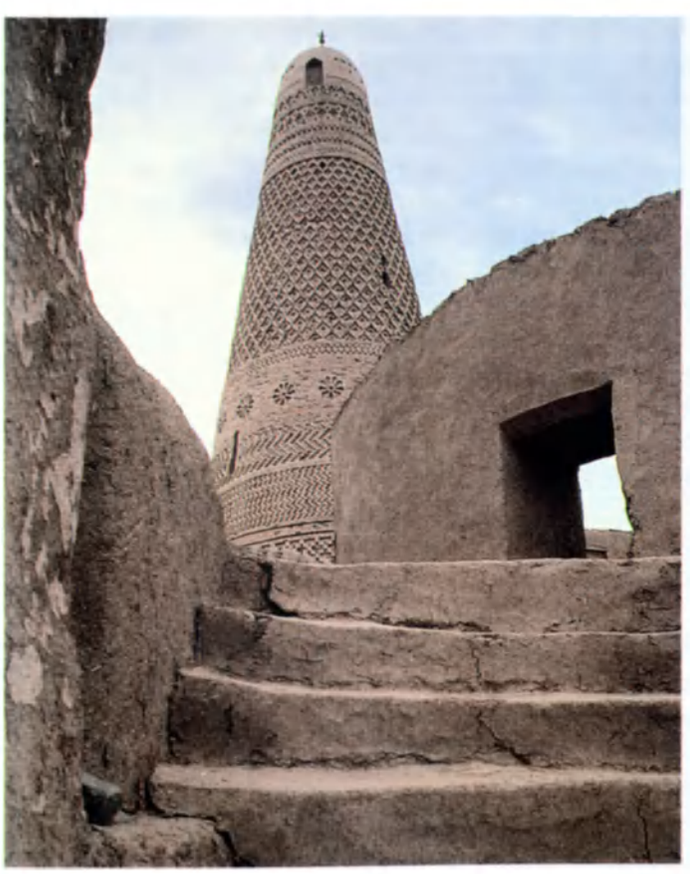
Western travellers to China brought back tales which had prepared us for all kinds of astonishing things. Among their number were Ibn Battuta from Tangiers, the Venetian Marco Polo, and many more including the Arab merchant Soleyman whose reminiscences inspired *The relation of India and China* (851). In *Pratica della Mercator,* a manual published in 1340, the Florentine merchant Francesco Balduccio Pegolotti gave much judicious advice about trading with China, where he had never set foot.

The Franciscan friars Joannes de Plano Carpini and William of Rubruquis were commissioned, in 1245 and 1253 respectively by Pope Innocent IV and St. Louis, to find out about the "Tartars" of whom Europe was then so terrified. Giovanni di Monte Corvino set out to convert the land of Cathay, then under Mongolian domination. His fellow missionary, Odoric of Pordenone, visited China around 1316, and his writings provided the substance of the fabulous traveller's guidebook generally known as *Mandeville's Travels.*

As we continued our voyage, the presence of China became increasingly strong. After leaving Sri Lanka we found traces of ancient kingdoms which at one time or another in their history paid tribute to the Middle Empire and were included in the complex politico-commercial system which was the basis of Chinese power and wealth.

Brunei was one of these kingdoms. Before the arrival of Magellan in 1521, next to nothing is known of its history except through dynastic chronicles. The very name of the sultanate may be of Chinese origin. At least since the tenth century, Brunei had paid tribute to China and traded with the empire. As time went by and as the prosperity of the sultanate, a great exporter of camphor, waxed and waned, these links strengthened and weakened by turns. But when Manajakelana, the first sovereign of the present Brunei dynasty, came to power at the beginning of the fifteenth century, he journeyed to Nankin where the emperor received him warmly. This outward-looking diplomacy was necessary to Brunei, which depends entirely on maritime traffic, and inaugurated a period of growing power which lasted until the arrival of the Europeans. Manajakelana was honoured by his protectors, and died at Nankin where his tomb has been discovered.

As early as the ninth century, the Philippines also entered the Chinese tribute system and the great commercial network of the Silk Roads. Under the Song (tenth-thirteenth centuries) and above all the Yuan (1280-1368), the archipelago profited from its strategic position and attracted the Chinese merchant fleet. But here European colonization played a different role. In 1570 the Spaniards inaugurated the transPacific route, and for three and a half centuries, Spanish vessels plied between Manila and Acapulco, transporting Chinese products and



bringing silver from Mexico. Via Latin America this itinerary led to Europe so that the Silk Roads girdled the globe. The Hispanic world, whose cultural presence is so strong in the Philippines, thus reached China by different ways.

"The biggest port in the Universe"

It is impossible not to feel that you are approaching the centre of the labyrinth as you sail towards Canton and Zayton, the two ports which vied for the title of capital of the Silk Roads. In the thirteenth century Marco Polo wrote that the former was the biggest city in the world—it was said to have a million inhabitants. He added that it was possible to enjoy so many pleasures in Canton that a man might think he was in paradise. A little later, Ibn Battuta considered Zayton to be the biggest port in the universe.

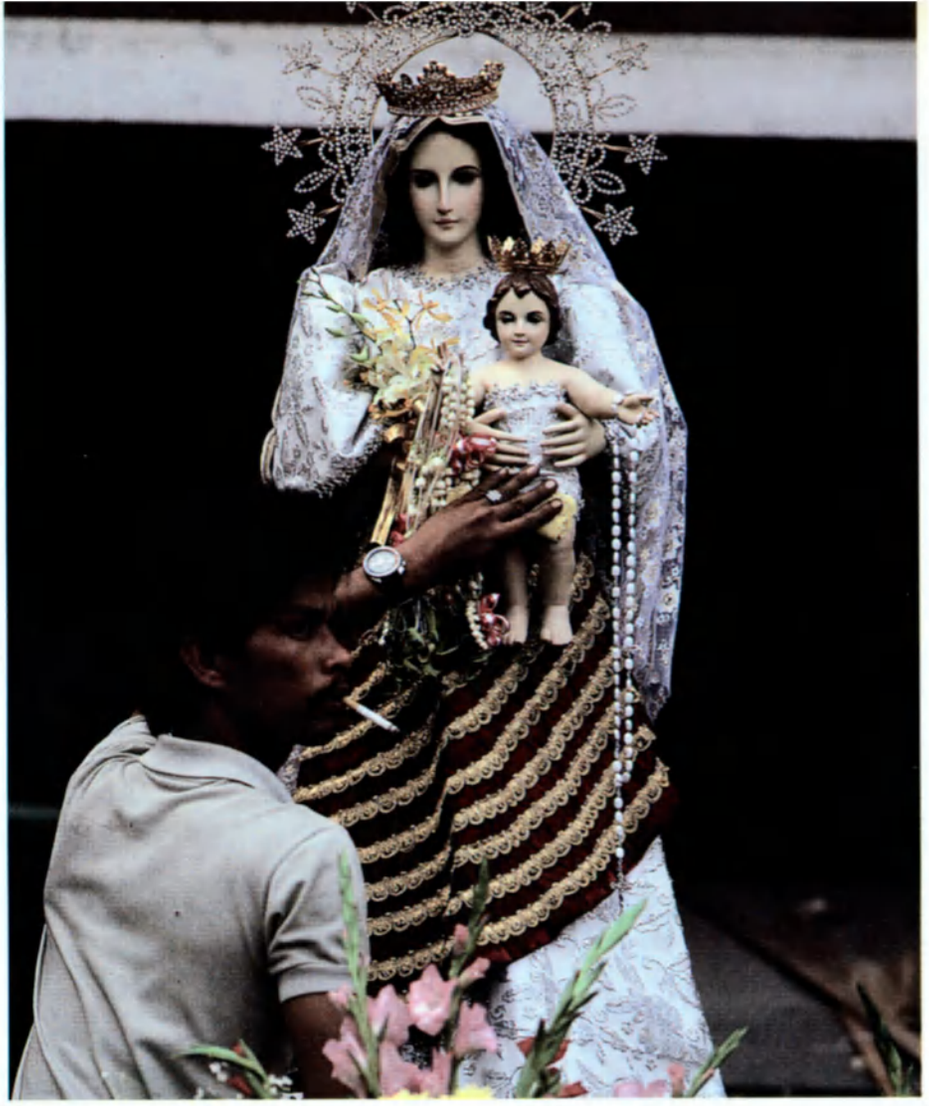
For centuries, under the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), but above all under the Song and the Yuan, and even under the Ming (1368-1644) and the Qing (1644-1911) who were on occasion tempted to prohibit trade, thousands of sailing ships followed the itinerary which is being retraced by the *Fulk al-Salamah*. They were laden with unguents and perfumes, precious stones, spices, silver and ivory (not forgetting the supposedly aphrodisiac rhinoceros horn). Some of them sailed as far as the East African coast, their holds laden with ceramics, silks and of course satin (the word is derived from a deformation of Zayton).

All the great trading cities we have sailed through seem to be modelled on Canton and Zayton, places where, more than elsewhere, trade encouraged the meeting of cultures and the settlement of foreign minorities. Persians and Arabs, whose communities Soleyman described in ninth-century Canton, have doubtless left the most visible traces.

At Chen Dai, near Quanzhou, we were welcomed to the "village of the Hui". The 17,000 inhabitants, all of whom bear the patronymic Ding, believe that a thirteenth-century Arab merchant is their common ancestor, and claim their Islamic identity. At Quanzhou, we were shown the tombs of two of the four disciples of Muhammad who are thought to have come to preach Islam in seventh-century China.

Many other religions flourished in the Middle Empire. Hinduism was brought to China by Tamil merchants. Buddhism was also brought by merchants and has left many sanctuaries such as the 1,500-year-old temple of Guangxi in Canton, whose monks offered us tea.

There is strong evidence of the presence of Christianity in the thirteenth century, when Mongolian tolerance enabled Giovanni di Monte Corvino, appointed archbishop of Beijing by Pope Clement V in 1307, to convert thousands of the dreaded Tartars. At Zayton, the tombstones of bishop Andrea Perugia, who died in 1332, and of other Christians give some idea of the important Catholic cemetery which archaeologists hope to find there.



Virgin and Child in a procession at Malolos, on the island of Luzon (Philippines).

Paradoxically, we never saw so many sanctuaries nor breathed incense before the altars of so many gods as we did in China, which is said to be attached to atheistic materialism.

At Fangzhou, the Silk Roads team saw the gigantic inscriptions dating from the Song dynasty to the Qing dynasty, carved in the rock to "pray for the wind". The return of the monsoon determined the great annual voyage to the Indian Ocean. With what religion was this wind-cult connected?

In another village, Su-Nei, we entered the last known Manichaean convent and contemplated the image of a solar divinity which popular belief wrongly holds to be the Buddha. Some suggest that Manichaeism may have been perpetuated into our own day in this guise.

This syncretic doctrine which originated in Iran incorporated elements of Zoroastrianism (which also reached China), Buddhism and Christianity. It reached China around the end of the seventh century, probably via the overland Silk Road. An imperial edict of 732 declares that although this religion is perverse, its followers should not be persecuted. In due course Manichaeism became the official religion of the Uighur of Turkestan until they were crushed in 842 and their faith persecuted.

Other religions reached China by other routes, such as Nestorianism, the heresy of bishop Nestor who proclaimed the divine and human natures of Christ and was condemned in 431 at the Council of Ephesus. How did this abstract theological thesis give rise to the religion which in 635 reached China, where many Nestorian convents were founded and where Nestorianism, after being proscribed in 845, reappeared much later in the encourage of Genghis Khan?

How can we explain the destiny of the Jews of China, who lived in isolation from the Hebrew community and whose existence the Jesuits rediscovered in the sixteenth century?

One of the great mysteries of the Silk Roads is how doctrines could survive the centuries and travel for thousands of kilometres without changing. At the same time, China and Europe lived in a state of extreme mutual ignorance. In Rome, at the time of the Yuan, it was believed that beyond Cathay lay the Christian kingdom of Prester John, whose troops would vanquish the Tartar hordes and deliver Europe from their terrors. ■

FRANÇOIS-BERNARD HUYGHE, French writer and journalist, is a former member of UNESCO's Division of Cultural Heritage.

RECENT RECORDS

listening

■ FOLKLORE

Haydée Alba.
Tango Argentin.
CD Ocora C 559091.

A superb rendering of tangos and milongas, recorded with double bassist Kicho Díaz and pianist Osvaldo Berlinghieri, who once accompanied the legendary Anibal Troilo. The bandoneon player is José Libertella. Haydée Alba has an expressive voice, higher-pitched than that of most tango singers. The poetic lyrics conjure up the heady and sometimes unsavoury atmosphere of the Buenos Aires slums: "Malena sings tangos like no-one/ Putting her heart into each line/ The vulgar and the common/ Are made fragrant by her voice/ For Malena grieves/ With all the sorrow of the bandoneon."

Malou.
CD Polydor 843 938-2.

Flamenco updated, with electric guitar and percussion backing. Malou, an excellent guitarist, has the husky and passionate voice of the Andalusian *macho*. The rumba, which originated in Cuba, has for some years been popular with the Gypsies. If the rumbas in this collection are rather weak rhythmically, the bulerias, closer to Andalusian *cante jondo*, are beautiful. A singer to look out for.

■ JAZZ

Le cinéma muet par Martial Solal. 1990: Musique du film de Marcel L'Herbier, *Feu Mathias Pascal*, 1925.
("The Silent Cinema by Martial Solal. 1990: Music from Marcel L'Herbier's film* Feu Mathias Pascal, *1925.")
CD Erato 2292-45504-2.

A master of harmony, the French pianist Martial Solal here improvises jazz at the frontiers of contemporary music. Sometimes he drifts into dreamy soliloquies, sometimes, influenced by Art Tatum, he lets the notes soar out in a dazzling stream. The accent is more on atmosphere than rhythm. A collector's item for Solal fans.

Dave Valentin Live at the Blue Note.
Valentin (flute), Bill O'Connell (piano), Lincoln Goines (bass), Robert Ameen (drums), Giovanni Hidalgo (percussion).
CD GRP Records D-9568.

Dave Valentin is a young Puerto Rican flautist from the South Bronx whose career took off in the late 1970s. Accompanied here by Bill O'Connell, former pianist with Mongo Santamaría; Lincoln Goines, former bassist with Tabia Maria; Robert Ameen; and Giovanni Hidalgo, currently with Dizzy Gillespie, he offers a pleasant hybrid of Latin jazz. There are particularly adroit versions of Milton Nascimento's "Cinnamon and Clove", Wayne Shorter's "Footprints", and Santamaría's "Afro Blues". Music for staying home and dreaming of a tropical paradise.

■ POPULAR

Guidoni.
Aux tourniquets des grands cafés.
CD Musidisc 195582.

Typically French lyrics with a caustic flavour reminiscent of the early Juliette Greco. Jean Guidoni sings of fleeting love, seedy cafés, the brothels of Lisbon, to an accompaniment that has echoes of jazz and popular dance music. It's easy to be carried away by Guidoni's haunting, cracked voice and the melancholy atmosphere.

Rachid Taha.
Barbès.
CD Nord Sud/Barclay 843 179-2.

Bilingual French-Arabic rock-rap from the mysterious Taha, whose voice is as rough as the boulders of the Aurès mountains, far from the monotonous rai that is often heard. Hard rock recorded at Oran with a cosmopolitan set of musicians—Arabic, French and African—proving that Algerian popular music is shaking off the rigid yoke of tradition.

The Cure.
Mixed Up.
CD Fiction 847 099-2.

Disco rock from a British band with simple but pleasant effects from synthesizers. The group's particular brand of humour comes over in the titles of tracks such as "Lullaby (extended mix)", "Close to Me (closer mix)", "The Walk (everything mix)", "A Forest (tree mix)", Inbetween Days (shiver mix)", etc., and in the quotation from Jules Renard in the accompanying notes: "Look for the ridiculous in everything and you will find it."

Isabelle Leymarie ■
Ethnomusicologist and journalist

■ CLASSICAL

Hommage à Paul Tortelier.
Gabriel Fauré: Elegy Op. 24 - Two sonatas for cello and piano Op. 109-117. Claude Debussy: Sonata for cello and piano.
Paul Tortelier/Jean Hubeau.
CD Erato 2292-45660-2.

Claude Debussy recommended that "the pianist should never forget not to fight the cello, but to accompany it", thus advocating a kind of fusion of the two instruments, so evocative of a corpus of French chamber music at once post-Romantic and Impressionist. Paul Tortelier, the distinguished French cellist who died recently, provides a marvellous interpretation of these pieces. Nor should we forget Jean Hubeau, a remarkable pianist who is too little known.

John McLaughlin.
Concerto for Orchestra and Guitar. The Mediterranean.
London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. Duos for guitar and piano, Katia Labeque.
CD CBS MK 45578.

John McLaughlin introduces his jazz guitar (he has played with such great names of jazz as Chick Corea and Miles Davis) into a new-style classical world, thus helping to perpetuate the breakdown of divisions between musical categories that was initiated by Stravinsky and Ravel and continued by Gershwin and Bernstein.

Claudia Muzio.
Opera Arias and Songs (Recordings from 1934-1935)
CD EMI *Références*, CDH 7697902.
Claudia Muzio (Recordings from 1911, 1934 and 1935): CD Nimbus, *Prima Voce* Collection, NI 7814.

The great Italian soprano Claudia Muzio (1889-1936) can be regarded as an immediate predecessor of Maria Callas. Nicknamed the "Divine", like Callas, she created several new operatic roles, worked with Toscanini, and won fame in New York and Latin America. Her lyricism, supported by an extraordinary sense of theatre, lives again in these remarkably well-restored recordings, which are valuable historical documents from her extensive repertory, notably roles of the school of *verismo* (Italian opera dealing with "real-life" subjects).

Russian music

Rimsky-Korsakov.
Christmas Eve.
2 CDs LDC 288001-2.

Aleksandr Knaifel.
The Canterville Ghost.
CD LDC 288009.

Ciurlionis.
Symphonic Poems, String Quartet.
CD LDC 288004.

A new record label, Saison Russe, has recently been created in the Soviet Union by the French company Chant du Monde in association with Harmonia Mundi. Its first offering includes a rare recording, conducted by M. Yurovsky, of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Christmas Eve*, which is based on a story by Gogol. The same conductor features on the second disc, *The Canterville Ghost*, an opera (after Oscar Wilde) by the avant-garde Soviet composer Aleksandr Knaifel which is undeniably influenced by Shostakovich's *The Nose*. The third disc features Mikalojus K. Ciurlionis (1875-1911), founder of the Lithuanian National School of Music, with narrative and neo-Romantic pieces ("In the Forest", "The Sea") followed by a more complex string quartet.

Remembering Leonard Bernstein

The Isaac Stern Collection.
Orchestra of the Air conducted by Leonard Bernstein. Isaac Stern (violin).
3 CDs Sony Classical SM3K 45956.

Guidon Kremer (violin),
Philharmonic Orchestra of Israel conducted by Leonard Bernstein.
CD Deutsche Grammophon 423583-2.

Rodrigue Milosl (violin),
Orchestra of Caen (France) conducted by Jean-Louis Basset.
CD Adda 590033.

Leonard Bernstein, conductor, pianist, composer and television personality, died in October 1990.The great popular success of *West Side Story* (1957) invested the reputation of his other work with a certain ambiguity, but the ambitions of the man who was sometimes ironically called the "Offenbach of Broadway" were not limited to light music. His little-known "Serenade for Violin and Orchestra", after Plato's *Symposium*, was first performed in 1954 by Isaac Stern. In "The Isaac Stern Collection" it is given an intensely emotional interpretation in a recording made in 1957 with the composer on the rostrum. The "Phaedrus" and "Agathon" sections are wonderfully poetic. Of the other discs, Kremer's seems the less committed, while Milosi's clarity is attractive. Two different ways of paying tribute to a great man.

Claude Glayman ■
Journalist and music critic

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

■ BOOKS FOR BULGARIA

I teach English and French at a foreign language school in the town of Berkovitza. The French edition of the *UNESCO Courier,* which my students greatly enjoy reading, is sent to me directly from your offices in Paris, and I should also like to subscribe to the English edition. Unfortunately books and magazines in languages other than German and Russian are very hard to find in our country, and my students, who have twenty-two hours of English lessons per week, do not even have dictionaries. We should be very grateful if you would allow us to inform your readers that our school is seeking new or second-hand books and magazines in English.

Vladimir Gheorghiev
Preparatory English class
Dr. Ivan Panov School
3500 Berkovitza (Bulgaria)

■ AN INTERNATIONAL CHARTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Although environmental questions have been discussed in your magazine on several occasions by internationally known writers, none of them has yet suggested that there should be a United Nations charter which would be comparable to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and would provide a philosophical, legal and moral basis for handling such issues. A document of this kind is today badly needed.

André Michel
Saint-Clair-du-Rhône (France)

■ REASONS FOR LIVING

As the mother of five children and the grandmother of thirteen, I should like to see the *UNESCO Courier* help young people to feel that life is worth living. In *L'appel du héros et du saint,* the French philosopher Henri Bergson wrote of the inspirational role played by exceptional men and women whose work and human qualities have contributed to man's tortuous journey towards universal fraternity.

Why not (as you once did in the case of Gandhi and non-violence) devote an issue from time to time to figures such as Louis Pasteur, Marie Curie, Nelson Mandela, Janusz Korczak, and many others like them from all continents and all civilizations?

Young people today need to see and hear something other than praise of violence, money and material success. They need to discover the meaning of joy and sustained effort and, as the French writer Michel Serres said recently, the necessity for a degree of asceticism in order to do something worthwhile and achieve fulfilment, the source of true happiness.

M.A. Pleutin (France)

■ LITERACY IN LOW-RENT HOUSING SCHEMES

On the "In brief..." page of your January 1991 issue, I read that a literacy prize has been awarded to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The Marists, Lazarists and Carthusians of the Lyons area of France provide an excellent education, but to whom? To middle-class children. My own dream is that they should come and teach in the low-rent housing schemes of the suburbs.

Before moving closer to the centre of Oullins, we lived for ten years near to three high-rise blocks and saw the poverty, despair and illiteracy that was rife there. And yet there was great human warmth. The best part of my children's education took place in that neighbourhood.

Marcelle Chalandon
Oullins (France)

■ ETHICS AND PROGRESS

I fear that the divorce between human achievements in science, in the arts and in other fields, and mankind's lack of an ethical sense will continue to be a feature of life on earth. There are those who think that we are progressing, and those, including myself, who see history as a kind of film with episodes in which the dates, the décor and the actors change, but not the patterns of behaviour.

G. Négrin
Cloyes-sur-le-Loir (France)

■ THE FAMILY SPIRIT

I am taking the opportunity offered by your reader survey (see the *UNESCO Courier,* April 1991) to tell you about my reaction on reading Andrée Michel's article on the European family which appeared in your July 1989 issue on the family. Families of the kind described in the article certainly exist. But large, balanced, solid families also exist and nothing is ever said about them. As the head of a closely-knit household and the mother of five children each of whom is married, I feel that I do not count. What kind of image does your magazine, which is read throughout the world, wish to give of the European family?

Mme de Buyer
Compiègne (France)

■ SEXISM

On reading your February 1990 issue, "The Art of Hospitality", I was dismayed to find little or no female authorship among the articles presented. The article by Perla Petrich may be a woman's contribution and should have been acknowledged by a "she" in the biographical note.

I have found a similar pattern in some other recent issues. In addition, women have seldom been included in the subject matter. Last September's issue of the American magazine *MS* highlighted several women who have been in the forefront of recent political developments in Eastern Europe. Your "Winds of Freedom" issue (June 1990) was less eclectic.

I have heard it said that the United Nations, unexpectedly, offers a chilly climate for women. While your list of editors, many of whom are female, would appear to negate that charge, could the scarcity of female authors in your columns possibly indicate that articles by women are in short supply. That seems unlikely, considering the significant output of scholarly and popular literature by women in recent years.

Ellen Lee
Iowa City (USA)

■ AGAINST TOTALITARIANISM

For the last year you have quite rightly been expressing delight about the rediscovery of freedom in Eastern Europe, but previously you had kept quiet about a situation which was nevertheless no more acceptable than apartheid, against which you fulminate.

Why keep quiet before the powerful? Surely totalitarianism is essentially the same everywhere.

B. Dominger
Nancy (France)

■ AN APPEAL FOR PEACE

An organization such as UNESCO should increase human awareness of the consequences of war. I should welcome, for example, articles that clearly explained subjects such as the possible effects of bacteriological warfare, the dangers of local conflicts extending worldwide, or the time it takes for the passions and hatreds engendered by war to cool down.

If every household in the world displayed a peace-symbol on its door on the same day, then for a few hours at least humanity would be on the same wavelength.

Let us hope that human intelligence will prevail.

Sylvie Guyonvarc'h
Auray (France)

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Museums and sports:
Olympic and other dimensions

is the theme of the latest issue
(No. 2 1991) of UNESCO's quarterly magazine

Museum

This issue of ***Museum*** surveys the successes and problems of the museum treatment of sports internationally. It leads off with a message from Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the International Olympic Committee. Then comes the question "Sports in a museum?", asked, and answered, by the Director of France's National Sports Museum. Other articles include "Sports as history" in Prague's Museum of Physical Training and Sports, anthropological interpretations of sports by an Italian specialist, and the sport museum as a business, which looks at the case of the Swiss Sports Museum in Basle.

For ***Courier*** readers, the Museums and Sports issue of ***Museum*** is offered at the special rate of 40 French francs (normal cover price, FF 48), or the equivalent in convertible currency. Please send a cheque made out to UNESCO, with your name and address clearly printed, and indicate which language version you wish to receive (Arabic, English, French, Russian or Spanish) to:

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